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ONE LORD, ONE CHURCH, ONE HOPE, AND ONE GOD

Mennonite Confessions Of Faith
In North America

An Introduction

Howard John Loewen



Institute of Mennonite Studies
1985

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DO ALL YOU CAN TO PRESERVE THE UNITY OF
THE SPIRIT BY THE PEACE THAT BINDS YOU
TOGETHER. THERE IS ONE BODY, ONE
SPIRIT, JUST AS YOU WERE ALL CALLED INTO
ONE AND THE SAME HOPE WHEN YOU WERE
CALLED. THERE IS ONE LORD, ONE FAITH,
ONE BAPTISM, AND ONE GOD WHO IS FATHER
OF ALL, OVER ALL, THROUGH ALL AND WITHIN
ALL. (Ephesians 4:3-7, JB)

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ABBREVIATIONS

AM	Amish Mennonite
BIC	Brethren in Christ
CGCM	Church of God in Christ, Mennonite
EMB	Evangelical Mennonite Brethren
EMC-EA	Evangelical Mennonite Church - Egly Amish
EMC-KG	Evangelical Mennonite Conference - Kleine Gemeinde
EMMC	Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference
GC	General Conference Mennonite Church
KMB	Krimmer Mennonite Brethren
MB	Mennonite Brethren Church
MC	Mennonite Church
UMC	United Missionary Church

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FOREWORD

Confessions of faith in Yahweh are as old as the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the New Testament the gospel consistently calls on believers to confess their faith in Jesus as the Apostle Peter did when he confessed "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). Through the ages this kind of confession has arisen out of a subjective, personal experience, often as witness in the agony of martyrdom. To believe and to confess have gone hand in hand in Christian history.

As the number of believers increased during the early centuries, the number of different interpretations of Scripture also increased. Norms defining consensus about the meaning of faith were needed for teaching, worship, defending the faith against unbelievers, and to achieve unity of faith and practice. The four so-called "Ecumenical Councils" at Nicaea 325, Constantinople 381, Ephesus 431, and Chalceon 451, struggled to achieve these norms, and in some sense they did, as the resultant creeds testify. However, many believers soon experienced these creeds as harsh rules to enforce orthodoxy and define heresy. This was not the fault of the creeds, of course, but of an institutional church which had grown powerful and lost its first love. Heterodoxy continued, but usually in secrecy and suffering.

Religious pluralism as we know it today began with the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Four movements or traditions emerged: the Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist, and Anglican. With them came the need for self-definition as well as a spelling out of their own uniqueness over-against each other and Rome. It was this need which gave rise to the confessions we acknowledge, and often claim, to this day. Curiously, none of these traditions called what they wrote "creeds" but confessions, yet in varying degree they all used and built on the theological formulations of the four early councils.

The terms "creeds" and "confessions" are often used interchangeably. Common usage has tended to associate creeds primarily with the patristic and pre-Reformation statements and confessions to the Reformation and following era. Creeds tend to denote timeless, classic, and universal statements. In

worship they aid in bridging the centuries as well as the differences between traditions. For most Christians the Apostles Creed is a standard norm, for example. Confessions tend to be more particularistic, personal, and occasional, that is, written for a specific purpose at a particular time and place. We know that this last point is actually also true of the early creeds but we normally forget this. We expect confessions to be less terse than creeds, more discursive and Scripture oriented and frequently more comprehensive theologically.

In this sense sixteenth century Anabaptist confessions are somewhat unique: many were written by individuals to test consensus on particular issues, they were not comprehensive theologically, they rely more on Scripture than on reason, they are subjectively rooted in personal experience, and they are apologetic statements like the 1578 Middelburg confession of Hans de Ries and the "Account" (Rechenschaft) of Pilgrim Marpeck in 1532 and Peter Riedemann in 1545. Yet the identifying of these statements as confessions may be accepting a typology quite unfair to Anabaptism. The AUSBUND hymnal written in a Passau prison between 1535-1540, the numerous martyrologies published by the Dutch Mennonites, beginning with HET OFFER DES HEEREN in 1562 and culminating with the MARTYRS' MIRROR OF 1660, the HUTTERIAN CHRONICLE begun in 1573 but going back to 1542, as well as the catechisms of Hubmaier in 1527 to Twisck in 1633, and many other types of extant literature must surely be classified as confessional. Lacking toleration and often the luxury of theological training, the Anabaptists' confessional literature was written on the run, in prison, recorded by their enemies during court hearings or other very existential situations, but is no less truly confessional because of this context.

It is generally true that the Anabaptists and later Mennonites have been and are non-creedal. Torture experienced because of doctrinal issues spelled out by representatives of the established churches, the stress of the learned clergy on doctrine at the expense of ethics, and particularly the desire to be biblical (Menno: "The Scriptures do not need interpretation; they need only to be obeyed"), led to clear antipathy to rational statements of faith. This was not what the priesthood of all believers meant, and means, to them. So also spontaneity in worship eliminated the felt need for formal confessional recital.

It is surprising, therefore, to find that the Anabaptists and especially the Dutch Mennonites wrote many confessions, as this volume demonstrates, probably more than any of the other three Reformation traditions. Besides their apologetic use these individual and corporate confessions became a major form of witness and, not least, instruments in the search for unity among the many diverse Anabaptist and Mennonite groups. In addition the 1610 confession of Hans de Ries was part of a major effort at achieving formal unity with the English Brownists and the John Smyth group. Unfortunately most of the sixteenth century confessions could not be included in this already sizeable volume. In any case there is enough material for a separate volume of sixteenth century confessional literature, beginning with the first formally commissioned confession of 1577, drafted by Hans de Ries and others, and including the very extensive documents to which illustrative reference was made earlier.

It is sometimes said that for Mennonites "their history is their theology." In a sense this is true for every human being. Nevertheless, studies in Anabaptism and Mennonitism have been more in the area of the historical than the theological during the new interest in this movement in the twentieth century. It may be hoped that the release of this volume will correlate with the historical to enrich our theological understanding of both sixteenth century and contemporary North American doctrinal issues which can enrich the awareness of group identity and facilitate increasing dialog on issues of faith and life. To this end scholars, church leaders, and all who are interested in dialog on issues, owe deep appreciation to the author and compiler of this compendium. May its promise be abundantly realized.

Cornelius J. Dyck, Professor
Anabaptist and Sixteenth Century Studies
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This study has grown out of a paper initially prepared for the Mennonite Experience in America conference held in the fall of 1982. The project made evident the paucity of research done in the area of Mennonite confessions of faith, especially on the North American scene. Therefore, I thought it might be useful to expand that initial project and make these confessions and my research available to a larger public in the form of an introductory book. This book is only a preliminary venture into this field which, until now, has remained largely unexplored, and understandably so. One would not expect a purportedly noncreedal tradition to do extensive reflection on its confessional heritage. Yet the fact remains that through the centuries the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith tradition has in fact produced numerous confessions among its various sub-groups. This form of theological expression has been left largely unstudied in contemporary Mennonite theological and historical scholarship.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to demonstrate the general importance of the field of Mennonite confessions for Anabaptist-Mennonite scholarship in understanding the theological development of the tradition. Anabaptist-Mennonite history must be conceptualized not only in terms of its origins but also in light of its theological (i.e., confessional) developments. Moreover, this study attempts to provide some of the basic texts and data that can be used for further investigation of this area. Yet it remains the task of the careful historian to carry this study further. Finally, this study seeks to make a contribution toward theological and churchly unity in a faith tradition that possesses a centrifugal force which too often has propelled it toward division rather than unity. The confessions can provide theological and historical common ground--a place to stand--from which conversation can be carried on with traditions within and beyond the

contemporary Anabaptist- Mennonite framework. This will be one of the underlying thrusts of the first section. Its thesis is that there exists a common, consistent center in North American Mennonite confessions that revolves around the fourfold axis of one Lord, one church, one hope, and one God. This is the theological vision which the confessions engender.

But how does one go about studying a whole series of confessions in a purportedly noncreedal tradition that has produced very little scholarly study in the field as such? Our overall methodology can be characterized in the elaboration of two metaphors drawn from the field of scholarship: the textbook analogy and the synoptic methodology. First, the function of the textbook within any discipline is to provide a consensus summary of the reigning or controlling theories, positions, and research in a given field. In this sense confessions of faith have a roughly similar function within a churchly tradition. They represent the doctrinal summary of a common majority, not a diversified minority viewpoint. Generally speaking they are consensus documents. As confessional texts they are one indicator of the theological development of a tradition. Here we are dealing with theology at a more official, institutional level, as represented within primary texts. We want to focus on the texts of the various confessions in order to study their function and content.

Second, there is the synoptic methodology. This will involve comparing and contrasting the main sub-traditions within the family of Mennonite confessions in North America. Therefore, our study will focus on the differences between the several Mennonite traditions. However, our research will give more attention to the similarities. Yet within this synoptic approach our procedure will also be analytic in that we will attempt to investigate various facets of the confessional traditions without prematurely imposing a thesis upon it; diachronic in that we will observe the development and substance of confessions in each of the Mennonite traditions; and synchronic in that we will study the various confessional traditions comparatively and thematically.

Our study will consist of three major sections. The two metaphors highlight for us the fact that we are dealing with a clearly defined set of texts. The largest section of this book consists of the various

confessional texts organized according to the main Mennonite traditions. This collection of primary documents is found in Section Two: The Confessions. However, this section is preceded by an introductory chapter, Section One: An Orientation, which provides an historical introduction to the confessional context, a theological interpretation of the confessional texts, and some ecumenical implications that furnish the pretext for the study of the confessions. In this section we will engage in five levels of inquiry into the confessional tradition: the levels of historical family, structural form, doctrinal framework, confessional focus, and ecumenical function. Each level of inquiry penetrates more deeply into an understanding of this confessional tradition. The final section (Section Three: Documentation) attempts to provide the documentation--beyond the primary texts in section two--on which our study was based. It includes the following: a series of tables designed to provide the data-base underlying this study; a listing of sources used in the study of confessions which the various sub-groups; and some appendices that include confessions which have indirect historic importance for the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition in North America. The appendices also include several recent editions of confessions not included in Section Two. However, the confessions included in the appendices are not represented in the data-base furnished by the tables.

I must thank the Mennonite historical libraries and archival centers of Winnipeg, Man., Goshen, Ind., Bethel, Kan., and Fresno, Cal., together with persons like Leonard Gross, Rachel Hiebert, Frances Martens, Martin Schrag, and Paul Toews, for so generously furnishing me with the various documents and texts needed to complete this introductory study of North American Mennonite confessions of faith. I am especially indebted to the Institute of Mennonite Studies, and particularly to Willard Swartley, for making the publication of this volume possible. In the process I have experienced a touch of the unity of faith which this book seeks to encourage. We have one Lord, one church, one hope, and one God.

Howard John Loewen
Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary

SECTION

ONE

AN ORIENTATION

AN ORIENTATION

The study of Mennonite confessions in North America is not a well worked field of scholarship, and the research that does exist relates to studies within particular Mennonite traditions.¹ This section, therefore, can be only a preliminary attempt to bring a slightly broader perspective to a field that will continue to require much more attention.²

I. AN HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The historical family of Mennonite confessions in North America can be viewed in terms of their unity and diversity--as one family tree with many family occasions. This one family tree can be viewed from four different perspectives: as one family, as two cultures, as three traditions, and as four periods.

It is instructive to begin looking at North American Mennonite confessions in terms of the metaphor of family tree, which is widely used in Mennonite life and literature. This starting point not only allows us to see the various confessions synoptically, but is required by the historical development of the confessions at several different levels.

On one level it points to an organically related family of confessions, although it is a family whose confessional offspring reflect distinct personalities--the conservatives, the progressives, the moderates, the independents. Nonetheless, the family, which has a univocally Dutch origin, can be diagrammatically related (Table 1).

At a second level, that one family of confessions clearly consists of two cultural spheres. One cannot study Mennonite confessions in North America without investigating their origins and development in Europe, for European Mennonite confessions were brought to and used extensively in North America by Mennonites.

European Mennonite confessions are organically related through a complex, sometimes very direct, borrowing and building of a series of confessions involving the 1632 Dordrecht Confession, the 1660 Frisian-Flemish Confession, the 1766 Ris Confession, the 1792 Prussian Confession, the 1836 Prussian Confession (Elbing edition), the 1853 Rudnerweide Confession, the 1902 Russian Mennonite Brethren

Confession (Table 1). The interrelationship of these has been noted and documented in both the Mennonite Encyclopedia and A. J. Klassen's thesis on Mennonite Brethren confessions.

North American Mennonite confessions clearly derive³ from these major European Mennonite confessions (Table 2). If European Mennonite confessions have deep Anabaptist roots and a clear Anabaptist orientation in their theology, then an initial reading of the North American context would suggest a strong orientation in a similar direction. But that conclusion will have to await the results of further inquiry.

At a third level of observation the family tree portrays another fairly obvious point: that Mennonite confessions in North America historically and organically emerge in the three main traditions of the Mennonite Church (MC), the General Conference (GC) and the Mennonite Brethren (MB) with a significant⁴ group remaining somewhat more independent. The derivative but more independent strain of confessional development includes such groups as the Brethren in Christ (BIC), the Evangelical Mennonite Conference--Kleine Gemeinde (EMC-KG), the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren (KMB), the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren (EMB), the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite--Holdeman (CGCM), the Evangelical Mennonite Church--Egley Amish (EMC-EA), the Amish Mennonite (AM), and the United Missionary Church, formerly Mennonite Brethren in Christ (UMC), and the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (EMMC), formerly the Rudnerweide Mennonite Church.

(1) The Hegemony of the Dordrecht-MC Tradition. Having its origins in the seventeenth century (1632), this confessional tradition has ruled the longest.⁵ The mother among Mennonite confessions, Dordrecht has functioned more powerfully than any other confession within a particular tradition. It has been the more conservative tradition in that it probably reflects the fewest external influences.

(2) The Diversity of the Ris-GC Tradition. This tradition had its confessional origin in the eighteenth century (1766) and has manifested the greatest diversity in the confessions it has used. For example, many local churches adopted and readopted⁶ significant European confessions in North America. In addition this tradition has never had an officially adopted confession in North America; consequently it is the most noncreedal of all the Mennonite

traditions. It is also the most progressive of the various Mennonite traditions, a legacy that stems partly from the more progressive oriented Ris Confession.

(3) The Stability of the Russian-MB Tradition. Having its confessional origin in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this tradition has done the least writing of confessions in the twentieth century. It has waited almost three quarters of a century to do so. Characteristically, perhaps, it represents the most moderate of the several traditions. Its confessional history has been stable.

(4) The Individuality of the Other Mennonite and Related Traditions. The derivative but more independent confessional traditions mentioned before are characterized by a greater individuality in their development. This is also reflected in their ecclesiological development and in the external influences they encounter and absorb.

At a fourth level the family tree exhibits a fourfold periodization in the development of Mennonite confessions in North America. Admittedly it is always risky to place complex historical development into clearly defined segments, but a general pattern seems evident, even though the periods progressively become fuzzy (Table 3).

(1) The Confessional Period: The Period of European Origination (1600s-1800s). The major European confessions from which the North American confessional traditions derive were produced in the 1600s-1800s. They fall into the final three periods of a fivefold periodization of the European confessional tradition: the union period (1585-1635), the collection period (1635-65), and the denomination or local confessions period (1660-present). They do not come from the individual confessions period (1527-60) or the group confessions period (1560-85).

(2) The Transitional Period: The Period of North American Transition (1700s-1900s). Each of the main traditions reflects a clear transition period which calls for the translation of the corresponding European confessions from German into English to meet the needs of the Mennonite churches in the new world. Probably the most vivid example of this is the Dordrecht Confession and its translation and acceptance in North America in 1725.⁸ The GCs and MBs followed much later in 1902, with several of the other groups making the transition in the 1800s.

(3) The Ideological Period: The Period of Fundamentalist Tension (1920s-50s). Although this period cannot be as obviously documented, it nonetheless exists and is especially evident in the MC tradition (with the publication of the Christian Fundamentals in 1921); the GC tradition (with the publication of the Statement of Faith in 1941); and the more independent traditions, especially the EMB confession. Perhaps the MB tradition did not write a confession during this period because the theological concerns of Fundamentalism were sufficiently accounted for in the existing MB Confession of 1902 so as not to warrant a supplementary statement or revision.¹⁰ In the same vein one could also compare here some of the GC local church confessions.

(4) The Ecumenical Period: The Period of Anabaptist Reorientation (1960s-80s). Since World War II there has been a recapturing of the Anabaptists vision historiographically and theologically. This is more difficult to document in regard to confessions, although the MC and MB traditions have written new confessions during this period. The MCs, in the tradition of Dordrecht, have refocused the Anabaptist theological heritage, removing the more fundamentalist features of the Christian Fundamentals of 1921. The MBs have also written a confession, more self-consciously linking it to the larger Anabaptist confessional heritage and significantly relying on the 1963 Mennonite Confession to do so. This reorientation is not so noticeable in the other confessional traditions except that the GCs have held a series of special conferences to deal with more specific theological issues such as peace and the believers' church.¹¹

Many Family Occasions

The specific occasions and purposes of the confessions are as varied as the times and places in which they emerged¹² (Table 4).

(1) The Dordrecht-MC Tradition

(a) The Dordrecht Confession (1632/1725). Within the European context Dordrecht comes from the period of union confessions whose specific purpose was to bring greater unity among the Dutch Mennonites, the Flemish and the Old Flemish. Within the North American context Dordrecht must be viewed at two levels. Transitionally, in its English translation

(1725), it clarified Mennonite historical and theological identity in terms of the defense of Mennonite nonresistance for society, the unity of Mennonites in society, the identity of Mennonites with society, and the witness of Mennonites to society.¹³ Historically it served the purposes of instruction in the areas of baptism and church membership. Presently,¹⁴ it symbolizes a rich Mennonite theological heritage.

(b) The Christian Fundamentals (1921). Appearing during the period of fundamentalist tensions, this confessional supplement is clearly intended as a defense and safeguard of the faith.¹⁵

(c) The Mennonite Confession (1963). This confession--clearly in continuity with Dordrecht--is a restatement and revision of the confessional tradition in light of current issues. Its purpose is to safeguard the truth, unify the church, edify believers, and witness to the world.¹⁶

(d) The Schleithem Confession (1527/1940s). The Seven Articles of Schleithem, ostensibly compiled by Michael Sattler, represent the oldest Anabaptist confession and come out of the Swiss rather than the Dutch Mennonite context. These articles defined the original tenets of the Swiss Brethren. Schleithem is not really a true creed but rather an agreement on the doctrines, usages and regulations peculiar to the Anabaptists. What they held in common with the rest of Christendom is taken for granted and not discussed at all. Thus the articles treat adult believers' baptism, the ban, breaking of bread with believers, separation from the world, pastoral duties, abstinence from the use of force or¹⁷ the taking of public office, and avoidance of the oath.

The Schleithem Confession has not had a high profile in the North American Mennonite confessional tradition,¹⁸ although the last generation has rediscovered its significance (1940s ff.). The new Anabaptist historiography of our century, together with fresh articulation of an Anabaptist vision, has refocused the significance of Schleithem for Anabaptist origins and identity.¹⁹ In particular, the scholarship of the MC tradition has contributed to the exploration of Anabaptist origins and, with that, the importance of the Schleithem Confession. For this reason we must also include this confession in the Dordrecht-MC tradition--but at the end rather than at the beginning, since it has not been functionally operative to a significant degree in the past. In

recent times it, together with the Anabaptist vision as articulated by H. S. Bender, has defacto attained a new confessional status, not only within the MC tradition but also to some extent in the other Mennonite traditions as well.²⁰

(2) The Ris-GC Tradition

(a) The Ris Confession (1766/1902). Within the European context the Ris Confession comes from the period of local or denominational confessions. Its purpose is to combine two earlier confessions; the Frisian Waterlander Confession of 1609 and the Dordrecht Confession of 1632.²¹ The occasion was the merger of the Zonist and Flemish congregations. It was translated into German in 1849 by van der Smissen for greater accessibility among European Mennonites. Within the North American context it too must be viewed at two levels. Transitionally, in its English translation (1902), it met the increasing need for a theological heritage to be translated into another culture.²² It contributed to instruction within the church and to clarification of Mennonite identity to others. The authorized publication was an English translation from the German, not from the Dutch; it became the unofficial confession of the GC church of North America. Historically it has continued to serve as a symbol of identification with a theological heritage, as an introduction for the devout study of scripture, and as instruction for church members.²³

(b) The Common Confession (1896). When the General Conference of Mennonites was established in 1860 it began with no creed and to this day has formally adopted no creed. The first statement of 1860 refers but briefly to accepting the evangelical position of Menno Simons and mentions adult baptism, nonswearing of oaths and authority of the Scriptures. The 1896 constitution has a simple paragraph on "Our Common Confession," which summarizes the General Conference position. Later revisions of the constitution carry through the same Common Confession with little change.²⁴

(c) The Articles of Faith (1933). A revised set of articles were proposed at the 1926 and 1929 General Conferences. They were rejected at the 1933 General Conference and returned for revision to the committee. They were never officially accepted, although official permission was given for their printing and dissemination.²⁵

(d) The Statement of Faith (1941). This statement is clearly a defense of the faith in the context of the prevalence of theological fundamentalism. It is written in conjunction with the purposes of seminary education in the GC church, which wants to have a closer identification of seminary education with the churches. The report submitted to the GC General Conference in 1941 and the final changes made at that conference demonstrate a clear tilt toward a more fundamentalistic orientation. In other words, the statement reflects the theological influence of Fundamentalism.²⁶

(e) The Local Church Confessions. In contrast to the other traditions the GCs gave birth to a series of local church confessions.²⁷ These confessions had their origin in different parts of the European family of Mennonite confessions and were both directly adopted from the European context or significantly revised and synthesized. Some were used extensively, others were not. The following examples of the GC local church confessional tradition reflect varying occasions and purposes: the Turner church--Mennonite identity and church discipline and instruction;²⁸ the Beatrice church--unity and thus Mennonite identity as well as faithful instruction; the Penner-Richert confession--conflating three European Mennonite traditions, its concern is Mennonite identity and biblical faithfulness in church instruction and discipline; the Alexanderwohl church (Unruh)--on the basis of general requests it was written for instruction regarding faith and emphasis on Mennonite distinctives, especially nonresistance; the Newton church--instruction regarding faithfulness.

(3) The Russian-MB Tradition

(a) The Mennonite Brethren Confession (1902). Within the European context the Russian MB confession draws heavily from previous Mennonite confessions, as well as from previously used MB confessions, for its content.²⁹ The tone, occasion and purpose of this confession, as stated in the introduction, are noteworthy.³⁰ There is a clear note of "overagainstness" and statements regarding agreements and differences with the other Mennonites. It strongly defends the faith. Its emphasis on separation is unique in North American Mennonite confessions. The historical break of 1860 with the Mennonite church as a whole is the occasion for such emphasis. Within the North American context it also

must be viewed at two levels. Transitionally, its translation into English was necessitated by the growing number of North American MBs and the increased use of the English language among them. Historically, its primary function has been to encourage faithfulness in doctrine and life.

(b) The Mennonite Brethren Confession (1975). The official occasion for the writing of this confession began in 1966 when a series of directives were given for the review and revision of the MB Confession of 1902.³¹ In 1969 a fourth draft of the confession was submitted to the conference for review, with the hope of having it accepted officially at the 1972 general conference session. In 1972 a sixth draft was presented to the conference for review and was subsequently referred to the area conferences (USA and Canada) for further discussion. At the 1975 general conference session the seventh--and final--draft was adopted with several changes. The 1975 confession clearly intends to be in continuity not only with the 1902 MB confession (which the text itself clearly reflects), but also with the larger Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage. It therefore reflects a broader identity than the 1902 MB confession.

(4) The Other Mennonite and Related Traditions.

The occasions and purposes of some of the more independent confessional traditions can be briefly summarized in this way: EMC-KG--instruction, edification, church discipline; CGCM--defense of faith; EMC-EA/1917--instruction, church discipline, unity; EMC-EA/1949--instruction, church discipline, evangelism; EMB--authority of scripture, fundamentals of faith; KMB--defense and instruction; BIC/1780--instruction and church discipline; BIC/1961--unity, defense of faith, evangelism.³²

Some comparative evaluations regarding the occasion and purpose of North American confessions can be made (Table 3). Mennonite confessions reveal about five different purposes for which they are written: defense of faith and Mennonite identity (stemming from the growing tide of Liberalism and the emerging Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy); church discipline and instruction (involving also expressions of hardened positions); unity of the church (including the union or peace confessions of European Mennonites); evangelism (involving public testimony); authority of scripture (relating particularly to the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy).

Additional general comparative observations can be made. (a) Most confessions articulate more than one purpose. The MC/1963 and the MB/1975 are the best examples. (b) Church discipline and instruction is the most uniform purpose expressed, but also decreases in emphasis. This emphasis is consonant with a tradition where ecclesiology, as we shall see, is at the center. (c) Unity in the church and defense of faith follow in the order of priority after church discipline and instruction. (d) Evangelism and confession as public testimonies is stressed least. Only MC/1963, MB/1902, MB/1975, EMC-EA/1949 and BIC/1961 have it. (e) As one moves into the twentieth century, one finds a noticeable tendency to accent the defense of faith and authority of scripture as purposes of the confessions, understanding so with the rise of Liberalism and the influence of Fundamentalism. (f) Occasion and purpose correspond roughly with the periodization that we have suggested, even though there are different reasons in each tradition for confessions being written or proposed confessions rejected (Table 3).

The diversification of the Mennonite confessional tradition appears to increase as one moves laterally from the Dordrecht-MC to the Ris-GC to the Russian-MB to the other Mennonite and related traditions.³³ In the twentieth century the additional factors of theological fundamentalism, denominational agenda and cultural pluralism have contributed to the increased diversity generally within the Mennonite world.³⁴

Yet within this growing diversity appears, nonetheless, a remarkable commonality of theological expression. Within the twentieth-century context of the strong influences of Fundamentalism, denominationalism, and pluralism--and perhaps precisely because of them--there exists a fresh opportunity for deeper levels of common dialogue between members of the North American Mennonite confessional family. The deeper organic connections between the various confessional traditions provide a constructive--although certainly not an exclusive or complete--basis on which to work toward a greater realization of confessional unity in the context of Mennonite pluralism.

II. TOWARD A THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

The previous section analyzed the confessions at the level of historical family. This section analyzes the confessional texts according to theology and from

three perspectives: structural form, doctrinal framework, and confessional focus.

THE STRUCTURAL FORM

A structural analysis involves looking at the confessions in terms of language, translation, editions; authorization and signatures; length; historical references; scripture references (Table 5; see also Tables 6, 7, and 8).

(1) Language, Translations, Editions. There tends to be a common pattern in each of the traditions. The languages that are used are Dutch (or dialect variations), German, English and others. The dominant translation pattern is from Dutch to German to another language; then from German to English to another language. The consequent pattern of numerous editions and reprints occurs in the main parent confessions, with Dordrecht leading with almost 200 reprints followed by the Ris-GC and the Russian-MB traditions respectively.

(2) Authorization and Signatures. Regarding authorization nearly all of the confessions receive group authorization for use at several different levels: official conference confessions (e.g., the three main traditions); official local church confessions (e.g., GC/Penner-Richert confession); unofficial conference confession (e.g., GC tradition). The breadth of their acceptance varies with the degree of their authorization. Larger group authorization invariably guarantees a broader acceptance. Concerning signatures, the majority of confessions have group signatures including two or more people. The single signature confessions are: GC/Ris, CGCM/1896 (1952), EMC-KG, GC/Alexanderwohl, GC/Beatrice.

(3) Length. There are a number of ways by which one can measure the length and coverage of the confessions. First, there is the number of articles which varies greatly: from 9 (GC/1941) and 10 (MB/1902) to the 20 (MC/1963) and 36 (GC/Ris) in the main confessional traditions; and from 11 in the EMB to 37 in the CGCM/1896 (1952) traditions. The average length overall is 18 articles of faith. Second, the number of words represents a more accurate measurement of length. Again this varies greatly from the long confessions--17,000 (GC/Ris) to 8,000 (MB/1902) to 5000 (MC/Dordrecht)--to the shorter confessions--3400 (MB/1975) to 1350 (MC/1921) and 120 (GC/1896). The

average length of the confessions is about 4600 words in the main traditions and 4000 overall. Third, the most accurate reading of the qualitative length of the confessions would involve a detailed analysis of the content of each article. This is not possible here. Some confessions have fewer articles yet actually cover a wider range of topics. The best example of this is the MB/1902 with 10 articles; yet it is much longer than the CGCM/1896 (1952) confession of 37 articles or the GC/1941 of 9 articles.

Fourth, there are the general trends that should be observed. As we move from European to the North American Mennonite confessions there is an overall decrease in length both in the number of articles and in the number of words. This also appears to hold true as one moves chronologically through the various North American Mennonite traditions. The most dramatic illustration of this is the GC tradition: Ris Confession (36 articles, 17,000 words; 1896 Common Confession (two paragraphs, 120 words); 1933 Articles (14 articles, 4400 words); 1941 Statement (9 articles, 300 words). But the trend is also true for the MC and MB traditions. The decrease in length is perhaps reflective of a change in the style in which the confessions are written: less narrative style that weaves in scripture quotations; scripture references placed in the bottom of each article or not included at all, rather than woven into the text itself; a more formal, cryptic and systematic style of writing confessions arising perhaps from the modern need for brevity (Table 5).

(4) Historical References. These references are usually found in the prefaces or introductions to the different confessions. (a) In regard to other Mennonite confessions, all the MC and MB confessions make such references, which clearly reflects a sense of continuity with the past, specifically with the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage. In the GC tradition only the Ris confession refers to previous confessions. None of the main GC North American statements do, although two of the local GC church confessions do. The CGCM/1961 confession makes nine references to other Mennonite confessions. (b) In regard to Menno Simons, the MCs have no reference directly, the GCs have one direct reference in Ris and three indirect ones in local church confessions, and the MBs have direct references to Menno in both confessions. The CGCM/1961 has three references to Menno; the UMC/1866 and the EMC-KG/1881 have one; the

GC/1896 and the KMBs have an indirect one in their confessional summary; the EMBs have an all but explicit³⁵ reference to the Anabaptist heritage of Menno Simons. (c) In regard to other references only the MB/1902 refers to Luther and Calvin specifically, in addition to some others; references to the Apocrypha appear seven times in the EMC-KG; twice in GC/Turner, and once in AM/n.d.; and the CGCM/1961 has six references to other sources (Table 5).

(5) Use of Scripture. In connection with the use of scripture in North American Mennonite confessions the following observations can be made (Tables 6, 7, and 8). (a) The high frequency of NT texts and references in the confessions clearly reveals a high view of scripture. Moreover, the comparatively high frequency of references to certain NT books and particular NT texts points to commonality among the various confessions and to something like a canon within the canon in the way that Mennonite confessions use scripture. Our subsequent comments will bear this out. (b) However, references increasingly appear to be placed at the bottom rather than in the text of the confessions indicating a certain erosion of the functional authority of scripture. This situation is perhaps a commentary on the extent of the actual use of the scripture principle, of the functional normativity of scripture, of biblical argumentation, and of the narrative form of theological reflection within the confession.³⁶ (c) There appears to be an increase in the use of the NT scriptures in the MC and MB traditions but a marked decrease in the GC tradition (from 1650 in GC/Ris to 13 in GC/1896 to 300 in GC/1933 to none in GC/1941). (d) References to the OT progressively decrease at two levels: generally an absolute decrease in relation to previous confessions and clearly a relative decrease in relation to the use of the NT. (e) There is clearly a dominant use of the NT over the OT. This pattern reinforces the traditional Anabaptist-Mennonite view of the superiority of the NT. (f) Within the NT the gospel of Matthew is used most often. This predominance is virtually uniform throughout the confessions, with the exception of the EMB where Matthew is second to John by a two to one margin; the UMC/1866 where it is second to John, Romans and 1 Corinthians which have the same frequency; the GC/Beatrice and GC/1933 where it stands third to Acts and John; the EMC-EA/1949 where it is third to Acts and John/Romans; and the BIC/1961 where it is fourth to Romans, 1 Corinthians

and John. Overall, however, Matthew clearly stands first. The predominance of Matthew is followed by that of John, Romans, and Acts. (g) Within the references from Matthew are several noticeable features: Chapter 5 (Sermon on the Mount) by far is the most extensively referred to; Chapter 25 (on eschatology), Chapter 28 (the great commission) and Chapter 18 (church discipline) follow Matthew 5 in that order in frequency. (h) Within Matthew 5 the section on love for one's enemies (vv. 38-48) receives the strongest emphasis by a margin of almost three to one. It is followed by the section on integrity and the oath (vv. 33-37).

Our observations on the structural form can hardly be definitive. Yet there are indications that point toward a common theological center inherent in the various confessions. It is particularly the historical and scriptural references that give some indication in this direction. But our theological analysis will have to probe much more deeply if such preliminary indications are to become more definitive in nature.

THE DOCTRINAL FRAMEWORK

Our purpose here will be to provide a content synopsis of the various articles from several different vantage points. There are some difficulties one faces in providing an accurate analysis. Some confessions devote several articles to elaborating on one doctrine, others give none. Some articles deal with several doctrines and so the same articles can be categorized in several different ways. The earlier European confessions do not always have headings for the articles of faith, although most North American confessions include subheadings for the individual articles. Where this is not the case one must decide under which heading they belong (cf. CGCM/1896 [1952], CG/Alexanderwohl-Unruh, GC/1941, etc.). Moreover, some articles treat a doctrine extensively, while others treat the same topic only in passing or not at all. Yet even when one has taken into account these problems there emerges a rather uniform progression which is as follows: God, Word of God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, Human Nature, Free Will, Conversion, Church and Its Mission, Church Offices, Baptism, Communion, Footwashing, Marriage, Church Discipline, Christian Life and Nonconformity, Divine Law, Integrity and Oaths, Nonresistance and Revenge, Christian and the State, Lord's Day and Work, Last

Things. Such a progression follows the classical model of theology. However, it includes a number of significant emphases not found in classical models: free will, conversion, footwashing, church discipline, Christian life and nonconformity, integrity and oaths, nonresistance and revenge, the Christian and the state.

The frequency of the articles also reveals some important facts (Table 11). Even though the articles are considered quantitatively and somewhat atomistically, the patterns are nevertheless revealing. In all the confessions collectively a frequency table reveals several important facts: (1) Eschatology is the singlemost dominant article in the North American Mennonite confessions. (2) A tabulation of representative European Mennonite confessions places the eschatological emphasis in fourth place. (3) Christology still remains a central focus of the North American Mennonite confession, although not as strong as in the European confessions. (4) The emphasis on conversion and regeneration has decreased somewhat, but when taken together with the dominant view on human nature it still remains a central concern. (5) Emphasis on Christian life and nonconformity has increased or at least remained the same, yet church discipline has decreased in emphasis. (6) Although the emphasis on human nature has increased, the characteristic Anabaptist emphasis on free will has markedly decreased. (7) Notwithstanding the prominence of eschatology-christology, salvation and discipleship remain a central feature of North American Mennonite confessions.

In a similar frequency table, comparison of the three main confessional traditions with the related Mennonite traditions, the following observations emerge (Table 12).

(1) MC Tradition. The order of frequency is Christ, Human Nature, Christian Life, Eschatology, Church Discipline, God, etc. This order represents somewhat of a break with the overall eschatological dominance of the North American Mennonite confessional tradition as a whole. Of significance here is the remarkably strong emphasis the independent MC groups (EMC-EA and CGCM) have on conversion and Christian life in their confession. This reflects the response to the basic reasons these movements gave for breaking from the dominant tradition.

(2) GC Tradition. The frequency order is Eschatology, Christ, God, Human Nature, Christian Life, etc. This reflects the general pattern fairly closely. Within the GC local church confessions the emphasis tends to be much the same: Eschatology, Christ, Human Nature and Conversion, etc., with the last two articles having the same frequency.

(3) MB Tradition. It is more difficult to tabulate the emphasis since there are only two confessions. Yet the emphasis does lie on the Church, Christ and Christian life.

(4) Other Mennonite and Related Traditions. Here we find a definite emphasis that reflects more the classical orthodox model of theology (cf. especially EMB/1923). The doctrines can be prioritized in the following order: God, Christ, Spirit, Human Nature, Eschatology, etc. Some Anabaptist-Mennonite theological characteristics that are prominent in the confessions of the main Mennonite traditions are often less noticeable here. But one must also note the distinct presence of these theological characteristics (cf. BIC/1780, UMC/1866, EMC-KG/1881, CGCM/1896 [1952]/1961, EMC-EA/1917).

Our analysis has pointed to a parallel progression of articles in the confessions generally, and a common centralizing of key doctrinal areas. The prominent eschatology article, taken by itself, can be misleading if it is not considered within the larger context.

THE CONFESSIONAL FOCUS

In our theological interpretation of the texts both the structural form and the doctrinal framework have each in their own way pointed to a common focus within the confessions. We will sharpen that focus by identifying a common confessional outline and center. A number of major accents can be identified within the family of North American Mennonite confessions by grouping them in terms of the natural progression found in the majority of confessions. Within this largely uniform progression of articles seven major accents emerge (Table 13). These major accents can be presented in the theological categories of the classical model of theology, since generally speaking Mennonite confessions are developed along the lines of the orthodox model, even though their content may differ significantly at certain junctures from the content of classical theology.

(1) Triune God and Creation. In his perfection as an eternal Spirit, God's unity, attributes, trinity, and fatherhood are stressed. In his creation he is the creator of the world and of all things. In his preservation and providence God is seen as the sustainer, governor, supporter, and ruler of the universe. Several of the confessions include a strong emphasis on the literal interpretation of the Genesis account and a denial of evolutionary theory (MC/1921, CGCM/1896 (1952)/1961). Some confessions are more metaphysical, others more soteriological in their focus on the nature of God. In the main, however, they express a uniform classical evangelical view. All the confessions have one or more articles in this area.

(2) Word of God and Revelation. There are very few references to the category of the Word of God as such. That of revelation appears somewhat more frequently with some confessions referring to general and special revelation (cf. GC/Ris, MC/1963, MB/1975). The focus falls on statements about Scripture itself. Here the emphasis is uniformly on a high view of scripture. Its infallibility, authority, and canonicity are stressed, with some comment about the relationship of OT and NT as well as the place of miracles. The term infallibility is used more frequently to describe the nature of its inspiration (cf. CGCM/1896 [1952], GC/Ris [1725], GC/1896, GC/1933, GC/1941, GC/Alexanderwohl, GC/Newton, MB/1902, MB/1975). The term inerrancy appears in the MC/1921 and the EMB/1923 confessions, clearly reflecting the influence of the emerging Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. The GC/Ris, GC/Beatrice, GC/Penner-Richert, KMB, CGCM/1961, BIC/1961, UMC/1951 and EMC-EA/1949 confessions have neither infallible nor inerrant in their articles clearly reflecting, in most instances, the influence of the earlier European Mennonite confessions which did not have the need to do so. The MC/Dordrecht, GC/Turner, EMC-KG, and AM/n.d. confessions do not have an article on scripture at all, probably reflecting the absence of a need to do so in their respective contexts. In these confessions the functional authority of scripture is much more evident from its narrative form which includes biblical argumentation within the text of the confession. Thus there is no need for a separate article on scripture. This appears to be true especially for Dordrecht and EMC-KG.

(3) Jesus Christ and Redemption. Here the accent is placed on Jesus Christ and redemption in terms of his attributes, redemption and incarnation. There is a marked soteriological orientation to the christology here (see note 45). The divine and historical attributes of Christ as Son of the triune God are invariably focused toward his redemptive function. In regard to the three offices of Christ--prophetic, priestly, kingly--the accent is on the priestly (the redemptive, mediatorial function of Christ) where through the shedding of his blood he brought reconciliation. His sacrifice is an atoning death that has power to cleanse from sin. This Savior brings a universal offer of grace and a call to faith. This entire way of salvation is based upon the incarnation in which Christ became truly human in the likeness of sinful flesh, thereby making redemption possible. This Jesus will return again to judge and to establish his kingdom. In its main outline, this christology reflects the dominant classical and Reformation soteriological view of the substitutionary atonement of Christ, although there is reference to the representative function of Christ also (cf. MC/1921). However, as in the case of the doctrine of the triune God and creation the overall christological orientation appears more consistently soteriological, and less metaphysically focused, than some of the classical orthodox christologies. It should also be noted that the Fundamentalist accommodations in christology is most markedly reflected in the GC/1941 statement where the five points of fundamentalism are clearly evident.

(4) Holy Spirit and Transformation. There are only nine confessions that include separate articles of faith on the Holy Spirit (MC/1921, MC/1963, CGCM/1896[1952], EMC-EA/1917/1949, GC/Turner, EMC-KG, EMB and UMC/1951). It is noteworthy that five of the nine are from the Swiss/MC related tradition. The EMC-EA/1917/1949 furthermore have a separate article on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, reflecting one of their distinctives that is a legacy of the influences of Wesleyan Pietism. Also the EMC confession explicitly relates the Spirit to the authorship of scripture in this article. Other confessions include references to the Spirit in their articles on God or in the articles relating to conversion and regeneration. The Spirit clearly has a transforming function. But the doctrine of the Spirit is not pronounced in the confessions. However, uniformly

there is an emphasis on the nature (deity, personality, trinity, and procession from the Father) and the function (office and characteristics) of the Spirit.

(5) Human Nature and Salvation. This is a prominent area within the confessions focusing on the questions of sin, redemption, free will and conversion. With regard to sin the confessions uniformly hold to the innocence of human nature before the fall. Here wo/man, created in the image of God possessed an uncontaminated freedom. Likewise the fall and its consequences are clearly focused--the deceit of Satan, the voluntary act of disobedience, the loss of the original state, the loss of freedom, the total depravity (although not in the Reformed sense, by and large), the universal imputation of sin, and death to all. The Ris confession is influenced here by Dutch Reformed theology on the question of election and rejection as it is influenced by the Reformed emphasis on general revelation (see note 33). The EMB confession is the only one that includes articles on Satan and angels.

With regard to redemption the confessions take up this theme here in connection with the human response to Christ's atoning work. Here the dominant emphasis is on the justification by faith through the redemption of Christ. We are restored through Christ the mediator. This salvation by faith is free and is universal offer of grace.

With regard to free will only seven confessions contain separate articles: GC/Ris, GC/Beatrice, GC/Penner-Richert, GC/Newton, EMC-KG, UMC/1951 and BIC/1961. The dominant emphasis lies within the GC tradition (including GC/1933) with other accents on it in MB/1902, MB/1975, MC/1963 and EMC-EA/1917. This distinction of Mennonite confessions stresses the importance of the limited but real freedom of wo/man after the fall. Wo/man is accountable for both the fall into sin and the faithfulness in redemption.

With regard to regeneration there is a very pronounced focus. In terms of the human dimension in salvation the accent in the Mennonite confessions is placed on the theological and spiritual dimensions of regeneration. We are not speaking here of a narrow, stereotyped mode of faith in Christ, even though in reality that has sometimes been the case, but of the great biblical and theological realities of the new birth, regeneration, repentance, holy living, adoption, and sanctification which involves

perseverance in the faith, assurance of salvation, and for some, baptism of the Spirit, miracles and divine healing (cf. EMC-EA/1917/1949, BIC/1961, CGCM/1896 [1952]/1961). At the basis of this process of conversion lies the new birth. This is clear in virtually all of the confessions, gaining particular accent in some.

(6) Church of Christ and Mission. This area receives the strongest accent in the confessions. Here we find the most consistent uniformity among Mennonite confessions in North America (except for GC/1941) in all of the specifics, with obvious variations occurring in different contexts and occasions. This area covers the largest part of the confessions. It can be naturally divided into two major areas: the inner nature of the church and the outer function of the church. Another way of viewing these two areas is: the nature of church life and the nature of Christian life. The latter includes the whole area which orthodox language would call sanctification.

(a) The Inner Life of the Church's Mission. The emphases concerning the inner nature of the church's life include its marks, membership, offices, mission, ordinances, marriage, and discipline.

The marks of the church are set forth in terms of its biblical basis in the OT and NT; its nature, organization, and function; its figures or images; its general characteristics relating to unity, apostolicity, holiness, universality.

The membership in the church is set forth in terms of its nature--its need for regenerate baptized believers to take seriously their responsibilities and duties as true members in the life of the church.

The offices of the church are described in terms of the NT basis and the institution of leadership--its qualifications, responsibilities, and ordination; the nature and order of ministry; the service of members; and the servanthood of leaders.

The mission of the church is described in terms of its purpose to witness, its discipling function, its mission to society.

The ordinances of the church center predominantly around baptism and communion (most often called the Lord's Supper), but also significantly on footwashing. With regularity the ordinances are presented in terms of their NT basis and institution, their command to be practiced, their meaning, procedure and purpose. In addition, in the case of baptism, its mode and the

matter of child baptism is dealt with; regarding communion the matter of self-examination and participation; concerning footwashing the servanthood example of Christ is especially stressed. In several of the confessions (MC/1921, MC/1963, CGCM/1896 [1952]/1961) there are other matters that are brought into the spheres of these articles of faith--the role of women, brotherly kiss, anointing of sick, marriage, symbols of order and brotherhood.

Marriage is presented in terms of its biblical basis (OT and NT) as a permanent divine institution that is to be carried out in the Lord. Being 'for life' and 'in the Lord', divorce is viewed as a breach with God's command. Emphasis is placed on the duties in the marriage relationship and on the family and the home. Marriage between blood relations and with those outside the church (and in some instances outside the denomination) is seen as a violation of God's order. Singlehood is mentioned infrequently and incidentally.

Discipline in the church is described in terms of its historical and biblical basis: its NT command and its procedure and purpose. The latter involves admonition, separation and withdrawal, excommunication, reinstatement. The repentance of the offender and the redemptive attitude of church members is stressed.

(b) The Outer Life of Christian Discipleship. This area includes nonconformity and discipleship, integrity and oaths, nonresistance and revenge, the Christian and the state, the Lord's day and work.

Regarding nonconformity and discipleship there is a strong, although not uniform emphasis within the confessions. Clearly the MC tradition has the strongest emphasis in this area. The emphasis is placed on separation from the world, a sharp distinction between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of Christ; on holy living that is attuned to covetousness, worldliness, pride, modest apparel; on life insurance in one instance (cf. MC/1921; also see CGCM/1896[1952]/1961).

Regarding integrity and oaths virtually every confession (except GC/1941 and EMB) includes this article. The focus is on its biblical basis (OT principle, NT use), command, definition, purpose, historical use; on truth and the judgement of liars; on the forbiddance of membership in societies and secret orders; and concern about pledges made.

Regarding nonresistance and revenge all the confessions contain this most central emphasis.

Included is the biblical basis and command (OT principle, NT teaching) to love one's enemies, not to seek revenge but to be nonresistant, to live by the law of love and not participate in war nor to take others to court, not to engage in carnal warfare of any sort. Christ is viewed as our example. In this we must remember our duty to government, but to give priority to the kingdom and its peace.

Regarding the Christian and the state every confession except GC/1941 includes this focus. Emphasis is placed upon the institution of government as ordained by God, its duties as a state and reason for existence, our duties as believers whose priority is to God and who must be separate from the state in their ultimate commitments. Therefore holding civil office is discouraged, generally speaking.

Regarding the Lord's day and work only five confessions contain separate articles on this area. Both MB confessions (1902 and 1975), EMC-EA/1917/1949, UMC/1951 and KMB contain articles. The focus is on the OT and NT basis, the observance of divine law, vocation, and rest from work.

(7) Eternal Hope and Resurrection. This is a prominent area and all of the confessions have significant references to eschatology, with the majority having a number of articles on it (e.g., from five articles in GC/Ris, GC/Penner-Richert and MC/1921 to four in CGCM/1896[1952], to three in UMC/1951 to one in MB/1975). These articles relate to the following eschatological realities: death, intermediate state, return of Christ, resurrection of the dead, last judgment and the final state. These emphases can be summarized in the following manner. There is death for all persons, yet the soul is 'immortal' (although not primarily in the Greek sense) and so we must face eternal life or death. The period between death and the final resurrection is the intermediate state where those who die before the return of Christ reside. At the return of Christ, his second coming in power, the living will be raptured and the dead will be bodily resurrected. There will be extensive apostacy in the end times. At the last judgment the wicked will be punished and the righteous rewarded. They will respectively enter the final state of hell or heaven, to eternal death or eternal life.

The content of the confessional outline leads us to make the following observations concerning the theological focus of the confessions. (1) The

articles of North American Mennonite confessions collectively revolve around four axes: theology and revelation (with a focus on creation and revelation), christology and salvation (with a focus on redemption and regeneration), ecclesiology and mission (with a focus on the inner life of church membership and the outer life of Christian discipleship), eschatology and consummation (with a focus on resurrection and condemnation). In short, the common focus is on the Creator, the Christ, the Church, and the Consummation. (2) Moreover, the confessional and consistent center of these confessions revolves most singularly around ecclesiology and mission, with the focus on the inner life of the church's mission and the outer life of the Christian's discipleship.

So far our study has, at each stage, pointed toward a common tradition--a³⁷ unity within the real diversity of the confessions. Each level from which we have mounted an inquiry into this confessional tradition has progressively pointed to a comparatively common, consistent center. At the historical family level we saw the family tree paradigm directing us toward a common theological origin, especially if the distinctives of that heritage have any resemblance to the twentieth century reconstruction of the Anabaptist vision. At the structural form level the general historical and scriptural references alluded to a common center. Most of the confessions consciously attempted to relate back to the Anabaptist heritage, some more explicitly, others more implicitly. Likewise, the majority of confessions reflected a similar usage of scripture references that reflects the distinctives of the general tradition. At the doctrinal framework level the content synopsis of articles pointed toward a parallel progression and centralizing of key doctrinal areas. It was noted that the prominent eschatology article could be misconstrued if taken out of context. At the confessional focus level the general outline even more so suggests a deeper commonality than we have seen to this point.

The use of scripture in the confessions also verifies our thesis concerning the four central axes (the creator, the Christ, the church, the consummation) and the common consistent center (ecclesiology and mission). The latter is confirmed by the prominent use of the books of Matthew, Acts and Ephesians in the confessions. All emphasize the nature and mission of the church. The other three

theological axes of the confessional outline also receive scriptural confirmation. Theology and revelation (with its focus on God, creation and revelation) is confirmed not so much by the use of specific scriptural texts as by the strong biblical orientation of the confessions with their implicitly high view of scripture. The truth of revelation is anchored in the reality of God and his revelation to us in scripture. Christology and salvation (with its focus on redemption and regeneration) is confirmed by the dominant use of the christology of the gospel of John and the book of Hebrews, and the extensive use of the soteriology of Romans. Eschatology and consummation (with its focus on bodily resurrection and eternal life and death) is confirmed by the prominent use of Matthew 24 and 25 and other references in the NT. The use of scripture in the confessions therefore confirms our observation that the historical, structural, doctrinal, and confessional similarities all point toward a common theological center.

III. SOME ECUMENICAL IMPLICATIONS

The thesis which has been articulated in the previous sections has clear ecumenical implications. The pluralist context of church and theology today only exaggerates the need for considering the theological and ecumenical quality of the North American Mennonite confessions.

If this reconstruction of the Mennonite confessional tradition has any validity, then the Anabaptist vision that has emerged in the twentieth century will need to be considered not only in terms of its Swiss Mennonite origins but also in terms of its continuing Dutch Mennonite developments. It suggests that the twentieth-century vision of Anabaptist origins, which has thus far been considered primarily in theological and historical terms, must also be studied in confessional terms.³⁸ Perhaps, then, the Dutch tradition will do for the development of Anabaptist-Mennonite theology what the Swiss tradition has done for Anabaptist-Mennonite origins. The Dutch Mennonite tradition has given birth to a series of interrelated confessions for each of the Mennonite traditions and has continued to nurture each tradition in a common theology. Hence the Dutch tradition is a basis for affirming the sixteenth-century theology in ongoing, continuous and diverse forms, yet with a remarkably common center.³⁹

If this contention has any validity, then it gives Mennonite theology an integrity in terms of its developments since the sixteenth century. The Anabaptist-Mennonite movement may not be a confessional tradition in the classical sense, but Mennonite theology today cannot be done only in the light of the twentieth-century Anabaptist vision of the origins of our tradition; it must also be done in the light of the twentieth-century Anabaptist vision of the ongoing confessional and theological development of a common tradition. The theology of Anabaptism in its origins and the theology of Anabaptism in its confessional development are not fundamentally different.

In fact, high regard for sixteenth-century Anabaptist origins is enhanced by an additional vision for the importance of Mennonite theological development as reflected in the Dutch-Mennonite confessional tradition. This gives to the common Anabaptist vision a broader aetiology. Therefore, one is not necessarily forced to choose between a monogenesis or a polygenesis approach to Anabaptist studies but to transcend it and to affirm a genuine diversity of visions within a real unity that exists in Mennonite origins as well as in the development of this tradition.

Furthermore this perspective provides a framework for a more adequate answer to the question of what Anabaptism is, both historically and theologically. If the Mennonite confessions, for all their diversity, do reflect a common theological center that has been for too long overlooked, then this has implications for doing Anabaptist-Mennonite studies within the context of Mennonite denominational pluralism. Facing the problem of pluralism by reasserting denominational boundaries is not a satisfactory solution. Rather, Mennonites must together work from the common center that does in fact exist. The denominational relationships have been determined too much by historical perceptions and misperceptions of one another.⁴⁰ Mennonites need to bring their present perceptions and practices more in line with the common theology that they confessionally, in fact, espouse.

This insight elevates Mennonite historical and theological studies beyond merely denominational horizons. The confessions are symbolic and representative of a common Mennonite theological heritage. They are a place to stand in an age of increasing diversity. They can enhance

inter-Mennonite dialogue and should be more centrally included in present Mennonite historical studies.

The careful historian must assess how the various confessions, individually and corporately, have actually functioned within the various traditions; decide what the positive constructive theology was at any given period; and generally include more systematically the confessions and their function within a tradition as an important historical datum. After this has been done, the question of influences can be addressed more accurately. Such studies will contribute to inter-Mennonite dialogue and place Mennonite studies on a plane that transcends denominational apologetics.

It has been commonly assumed that Mennonites are a noncreedal and therefore a nonconfessional tradition since they do not allow any creed to have the kind of functional, operative authority in adjudicating theological matters as do, for example, the creeds and confessions of the mainline Protestant traditions. A number of the confessions, in fact, make this point of belonging to a noncreedal tradition.⁴¹ Those claims, however, do not sufficiently distinguish between the terms "creedal" and "confessional." The European and North American Mennonite tradition is very much a confessional tradition, even though it is not a creedal tradition in the classical sense of that term.⁴² Precision in defining the two terms is critical in order to understand legitimately the place and role of a rich confessional heritage that should be affirmed and not simply denied because Mennonites are noncreedal.⁴³

The authority of confessions is not zero in the Mennonite tradition; it is something, and to the extent that such authority exists (and it must, in any viable religious tradition) to that same extent the tradition is also confessional. If Mennonites want to engage in historical and theological studies, they must take seriously their confessional tradition for it provides one significant angle of vision on the historical unfolding of Mennonite life and thought.

The implications of accepting this fact are important. Such a perspective counters a narrow sectarianism and rigid denominationalism. More importantly, it lends great strength to the theological vision of Anabaptism by taking more seriously the tradition as a whole which gave birth to it. As mentioned before, it provides a theological construct anchored not only in the theological vision

of sixteenth-century Anabaptist origins but also in the theological formulations reflected in the subsequent confessional developments. This theological construct can serve as a continuing framework for the Anabaptist-Mennonite theological reflection. Moreover, it provides a basis for inter-confessional dialogue with other traditions as well.⁴⁴

The confessional framework revolves around the fourfold axis of theology, christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. It provides a theology of revelation and creation, of redemption,⁴⁵ of church, and of hope. The focus is on creation and the word of God; on redemption and regeneration; on the inner life of the church's mission and the outer life of the Christian's discipleship; and on judgment and resurrection hope.⁴⁶ The theological structure of the Anabaptist confessional tradition espouses one Lord, one church, one hope and one God. It provides a basis for the kind of theological reflection that contributes to the unity and identity of the church.

Thus the Mennonite confessional tradition offers a promise. The comparatively common, consistent theological center contributes to a truly integrative pluralism in the Mennonite family of faith. Pluralism is rich when there is a firm center. The common confessional tradition serves as a shared promise and as a shared paradigm for Mennonite ecumenicity under the fourfold center of one Lord, one church, one hope, one God.

Footnotes to Section One

1. In the Dordrecht-MC tradition Irvin Horst is writing a detailed history of the Dordrecht Confession for release in a Dutch publication. Amos B. Hoover has recently published a book, The Jonas Martin Letters (Muddy Creek Farm Library, 1982), with a chapter entitled "350 Years Since the Dordrecht Confession of Faith." In the Russian-MB tradition A. J. Klassen has written an unpublished master's dissertation on "Mennonite Brethren Confessions of Faith: Historic Roots and Comparative Analysis," University of British Columbia, 1965. Much of the research for his extensive analysis of the MB/1902 Confession is included in a second unpublished master's thesis on "The Roots and Development of Mennonite Brethren Theology to 1914," Wheaton College, 1966. In the Brethren in Christ tradition the work of scholars like Martin Schrag (Messiah College) and several others has produced an unusual amount of reflection on confessions in a Mennonite-related tradition that is in some respects the most unconfessional of Mennonite traditions.

2. The potential scope of a study on Mennonite confessions of faith and related materials includes the following areas: (a) denominational confessions, (b) local church confessions, (c) catechisms, (d) covenant statements, (e) confessional guides and aids, (f) manuals of doctrine. In each area one must also take into account the official, unofficial or individual levels at which they are written. In this study we are dealing essentially with the first area of denominational confessions, necessarily including some representative local church confessions in the process.

The consideration of these confessional texts within the various Mennonite confessions raises the question of their relative authority within each tradition. At times confessions within the Mennonite tradition probably function more normatively, de facto, than do the official confessions of more creedal traditions. This study will not address itself in detail to the question of the relative

authority of each confession, which must remain the ongoing task of the careful historian. However, later in this section we will deal with the larger question of the degree to which we are a creedal or noncreedal tradition.

3. Briefly the chronology of the representative North American Mennonite confessions is as follows: 1725 (MC-Dordrecht); 1780 (BIC; also 1881, 1916, 1941, 1961); 1866/67 (UMC/MBC); 1878 (GC Turner); 1881 (EMC-KG; also 1913); 1896 (CGCM; also 1952, 1961); 1895 (GC Ris); 1896 (GC Common Confession); 1902 (MB Russian, also 1916); 1917 (EMC-EA; also 1936, 1949); 1918 (GC Beatrice); 1921 (MC Christian Fundamentals); 1923 (EMB; also 1950); 1929 (KMB; also 1940); 1933 (GC Articles); n.d. (GC Penner-Richert); n.d. (GC Alexanderwohl/Unruh); 1937 (GC Newton; also cf. 1836); 1940s ff (Schleitheim Confession, 1527); 1963 (MC Mennonite Confession; 1975 (MB Confession of Faith).

4. Organizing the North American Mennonite confessional tradition according to the denominational rubrics has its limitations, especially when one deals with aspects of the confessional tradition pre-dating the formation of the various Mennonite conferences, or during the earlier stages of a newly formed denominational conference. For example, the major group of Mennonites in Canada from 1874 to the 1920s were neither MC, GC, nor MB, even though these conferences were established in 1860 or thereafter. Today these groups represent the three largest Mennonite conferences. However, when these traditions are viewed historically other structural patterns can be discerned. Yet organizing our treatment of the confessional tradition in terms of the main Mennonite conferences and the smaller related groups has validity for several reasons. First of all, the confessions themselves, by and large, are a product of the identity-formation of these varying traditions, sometimes existing even before the current denominational labels were attached to these conferences. Furthermore, our primary reference point for defining these confessional groupings is not, first of all, the different Mennonite conferences, but a confessional tradition to which these groups have attached themselves and toward which they have different orientations. In short, the reference point for our approach is not simply institutional but also notably theological. For the various Mennonite denominational traditions have been defined and shaped

both by theological "creeds" and institutional "structures." The dynamic interaction between "creeds" and "structures" in the formation of religious traditions is a complex one. This study attempts to acknowledge the importance of both poles in this dynamic: the confessions of faith and the communities of faith that embodied them.

5. See Margaret Loewen Reimer, "The Dordrecht Confession: Mennonite Statements of Faith United Early Movement," Mennonite Reporter 12 (April 19, 1982), p. 5, for a very useful summary of the interrelated Mennonite confessional tradition in light of the Dordrecht heritage. Included are excerpts from all eighteen articles of the Dordrecht text.

6. A good example here is the GC/Beatrice (1946) confession, which reflects a very strong sense of standing within the long tradition of Dutch-Mennonite confessions going back to the sixteenth century.

7. ME, I, pp. 679-86; also A. J. Klassen, "Mennonite Brethren Confessions of Faith," pp. 81ff.

8. See footnotes 11 and 12.

9. ME, I, states the following about the MC/1921 and GC/1941 statements: "The Mennonite Church (MC) in 1921, and the General Conference Mennonite Church in 1941, both officially adopted doctrinal statements which do not profess to be confessions of faith but are such in effect nevertheless. Both reflect the influence of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy which continued in the United States and Canada during the first half of the 20th century" (p. 685).

10. This is the interpretation offered by Dr. J. B. Toews of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in a private conversation, October 1982.

11. Both the GC and the MC general conferences "have also adopted comprehensive declarations of faith on nonresistance, the Mennonite Church (MC) at its session at Turner, Ore., in 1937, and again at Goshen, Ind., in 1950, the General Conference Mennonite Church at its 1941 Souderton sessions." (ME, I, p. 685). Subsequently the GC church has also produced statements relating to the nature of the believers' church. See S. F. Pannabecker, Open Doors. A History of the General Conference Mennonite Church

(Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1975), p. 409, for a list of the number of statements officially approved at conference sessions in the 1950s and 1960s, and Gospel Herald, Oct. 10, 1961, p. 883, for reference to MC statements on war, nonconformity and race relations.

12. In addition to the records of the various general conference proceedings in the different Mennonite traditions (which we specifically cite for documentation here), there are the prefaces, introductions and forewords (which we only generally cite for documentation in this section) that provide the data for our observations.

13. Hoover, p. 964 also ME,II, pp. 92-93.

14. See J. C. Wenger's introduction to the English translation of the Dordrecht Confession included in his The Doctrines of the Mennonites (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1950).

15. See Proceedings of the Mennonite General Conference (From the First to the Eleventh General Conference, 1898-1919), Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1921), pp. 216-26, where in 1919 there is resistance to and revision of the proposed Fundamentals; Yearbook 1921, pp. 10, 25, where it is accepted; Yearbook 1923, pp. 8-9, where acceptance and printing of the Christian Fundamentals are also recorded. The minutes of the 1921 conference and the report of the Committee on Fundamentals are recorded in Gospel Herald, Sept. 22, 1921; Nov. 10, 1921.

16. An editorial in the Gospel Herald, Oct. 10, 1961, states that the preparation of this new confession, authorized in 1957, "does not arise from any desire to repudiate earlier statements, such as the Dordrecht Confession (1632) or Christian Fundamentals (1921). It represents rather a desire for a clearer answer to the questions raised in the life and thought of the Mennonite Church in the world today." (p. 883). The same editorial goes on to provide an excellent background on the 1963 confession. In 1957 the conference authorized the preparation of a new confession of faith. The goal at that time was to have the appointed committee provide a progress report in 1959 with a final statement ready by 1961. Major time was given to the consideration of the confession at the 1961 general conference, but

because of the numerous changes suggested, the recommendation for the adoption of the confession was tabled in hope of having it accepted in 1963. It was nonetheless approved in principle at the 1961 conference, with no serious theological disagreements. The 1963 yearbook has a summary of the development of the confession and the proceedings of the 1963 conference response to and acceptance of it. From the 1961 to the 1963 version of the confession there were minor editorial changes in the preamble and in the text, and the articles were reduced from 21 to 20 by incorporating a separate article on church discipline into the already lengthy article on the church of Christ. (See Mennonite General Conference Proceedings, 33rd Session, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, August 22-25, 1961, pp. 63-64. The adoption of this confession was seen as a momentous occasion for the (Old) Mennonite Church and as a reaffirmation of the Dordrecht tradition. See Gospel Herald, Oct. 10, 1961, p. 883; July 23, 1963, p. 629; Sept. 3, 1963, p. 771. Subsequent years, however, have seen some controversy over the 1963 confession. In the minutes of the Mennonite Church General Board meeting at Bowling Green, Ohio, August 10-11, 1981, Article H asks for a revision of the 1963 confession. However, no new formulation is likely to be adopted in the near future.

17. See "Confession of Faith," ME, I, p. 680; and Reimer, p. 5, for summaries on the Schleithem Confession.

18. Virtually no attention is given to the Schleithem Confession in North American Mennonite life and literature until World War II, when North American Mennonite scholarship focused its importance for sixteenth-century Anabaptist origins and identity. See, for example, the following contributions published in MQR during this time: R. Friedmann, "Schleithem Confessions (1527) and Other Doctrinal Writings of the Swiss Brethren in a Hitherto Unknown Edition," XVI (1942), 82-98; J. C. Wenger, "Schleithem Confession of Faith," XIX (1945), 243-53; M. S. Augsburger, "Michael Sattler (1527): Theologian of the Swiss Brethren Movement," XL (1966), 238-39; H. W. Meihuizen, "Who Were the 'False Brethren' Mentioned in the Schleithem Articles?" XLI (1967), 200-22; J. H. Yoder, trans. and ed., The Legacy of Michael Sattler, reviewed by Marion Wenger, LIII (1979), 82f.

19. See H. S. Bender, The Anabaptist Vision (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1944), for a threefold summary of the vision on pp. 20-33. With the Schleithem Confession and the Bender vision in mind, Leonard Gross suggests that three strategic areas define early Anabaptism: the nature of Christian obedience, the idea of the gathered people of God, and the way of Christian love. "Discerning Our Common Faith," Gospel Herald, Feb. 22, 1977, p. 152. This entire issue of the Gospel Herald is given to highlighting the Schleithem Confession on its 450th anniversary with an editorial on "The Seven Words of Schleithem" and two contributions by John H. Yoder, "The Schleithem Text" and "The Schleithem Brotherly Union." Gross's article appears as the "Introduction" to Yoder's The Schleithem Confession.

20. Leonard Gross states that "Schleithem...became programmatic for many Mennonites as a confession of faith, both as an affirmation of the Christian way of life within brotherhood, as well as a witness and mission to all people" Gospel Herald, Feb. 22, 1977, p. 151.

21. Thus C. Henry Smith can say that "the Cornelis Ris statement agrees with that of Dordrecht in the fundamentals, though differing somewhat in non-essential details. It is slightly more philosophical and tolerant than the latter" The Story of the Mennonites, (3rd ed.; Newton, Kans.: Mennonite Publication Office, 1950), p. 74.

22. The 1902 Ris translation was reprinted as the Mennonite Articles of Faith in 1946. In 1930 the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (GC) published a condensed and revised form of the Cornelius Ris confession (see Appendix II.D). Cf. ME, I, p. 685.

23. See Proceedings of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America, 17th Session, Mountain Lake, Minnesota, Oct. 5-12, 1905, p. 14. Resolution 41 issues a strong recommendation to accept the Ris Confession.

24. I am relying here on the useful summary provided by Pannabecker, p. 387. Characteristically stressing the noncreedal heritage, Pannabecker states that "the General Conference has not been too much concerned about precise statements of faith or their elaboration. In the earlier days it was rather

assumed that a few phrases were sufficient to identify Mennonite essentials with which everyone was already acquainted. Mennonite faith was embodied in a way of life which had been handed down by the forebears, and only when that way of life was questioned was Mennonite faith in danger" (pp. 387-88). Thus he maintains that neither the 1895 translated version of the Ris Confession nor the 1941 Souderton Statement can be regarded as creedal statements. Contrast here ME, I, p. 685, where the 1941 Statement is viewed as a confession of faith.

25. One should note the interesting report on the committee for the unification of the articles of faith in the Official Minutes and Reports of the 24th Session of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America, Aug. 22-29, 1926, pp. 231-2. Authorization to print the articles is stated in Resolution 108 in the Official Minutes and Reports of the 26th Session, Aug. 23-30, 1933.

26. The following changes were made: Article 2 (bodily resurrection from the dead; deity of Christ); Article 4 (infallibility of Bible, with the accent taken off infallible guide); Article 6 (the accent is taken off social emphasis and placed on discipleship). See the Souderton, Pennsylvania, Official Minutes and Reports of the 29th Session, Aug. 17-22, 1941, pp. 36-37, 159-62. This statement was "adopted" in the revised constitution of 1950 (See the Reports and Official Minutes of the 32nd Session, Aug. 23-30, 1950. However it should be noted that the statement was never really "officially adopted" even though it has been used in that way.

27. The underlying ecclesiology of the General Conference tradition accounts for the characteristic profusion of local church confession. S. F. Pannabecker states it well when he observes that "the concept of unity in essentials and liberty in nonessentials provides" the basic idea that governs the GC understanding of the church and its mission. Derived from this basic idea are such things "as congregational independence, diversity of patterns of thought and life, free experimentation with new ideas, and a hesitancy to apply control through disciplinary actions" (p. 386). In light of this underlying theology it should be noted that there is a remarkable commonality in the doctrinal affirmations of the confessions.

28. The Westbrook GC church at Mountain Lake, Minnesota adopted the same confession (n.d.).

29. See A. J. Klassen, "Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith."

30. See the introduction to the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith (1902).

31. The occasion for the writing of this confession is recorded in the yearbooks of the 50th (1966), the 51st (1969), the 52nd (1972), and the 53rd (1975) sessions of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches. At the 1975 session three changes were made before its final adoption by the conference. The concerns related to women in ministry, love and nonresistance, Christian integrity, premillennial eschatology, and communion for non-baptized members. See 1975 yearbook, pp. 16-17. For a fuller account of the sessions relating to the confession see the Yearbook of the 50th Session of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, Corn, Oklahoma, Nov. 25-29, 1966, pp. 27-28; the Yearbook of the 51st Session, Vancouver, British Columbia, Aug. 23-26, 1969, pp. 28-45; the Yearbook of the 52nd Session, Reedley, California, Nov. 11-14, 1972, pp. 16-22; the Yearbook of the 53rd Session, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Aug. 9-12, 1975, pp. 7-18. A Mennonite Brethren Herald editorial for May 2, 1975, issues a strong complaint that the 1975 Confession has been processed much too slowly. After the 1975 M.B. Confession was officially accepted the two major denominational journals, the Mennonite Brethren Herald (Canada) and the Christian Leader (USA) ran a lengthy parallel series of articles on each of the sixteen articles of the confession. See the 1977 issues of each magazine.

32. The Brethren in Christ have done significant work in regard to their own confessional history through scholars like Martin Schrag. See the bibliography for further references.

33. In the European sphere the Dordrecht-MC tradition appears to experience the least external influence; the Ris-GC experiences the initial influences of the Dutch Reformed tradition (e.g., election, natural theology, and generally a more liberalizing influence; cf. Smith, p. 747); the Russian-MB reflects the German Baptist influences of

Pietism (cf. the reliance on the 1846 Baptist Confession); the related Mennonite traditions are not entirely uniform but the influences of Pietism and Fundamentalism generally appear more prominent in these confessional traditions than in the dominant three.

34. The MB confessional tradition does not so clearly reflect the growing theological diversity as do the other traditions. See footnote 8.

35. See the Constitution of the Conference of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church, translated revised and adopted in 1952, p. 3 Article II (the reference to the thematic text of Menno Simons, 1 Cor. 3:11). See also Article 2 of the EMB Constitutions as recorded in their first annual conference reports: "Basic Beliefs. Teaching repentance and forgiveness through faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ and to baptize on a living faith. To prove by word and deed that we are nonresistant. Do not take the oath. Practice church discipline according to the Word. Not to join a secret society. Continue to build unitedly on the God given Foundation Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 3, 11." In A Concise Record of Our Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Annual Conference Reports 1889-1979, p. 5.

36. In regard to their use of scripture and style the confessions can be typologized in the following way: strongly narrative (MC/Dordrecht, GC/Ris, GC/Beatrice, GC/Newton, EMC-KG, KMB); moderately narrative (MC/1963, MB/1902 and 1975, EMC-EA/1917, GC/1933, GC/Penner-Richert); systematical (MC/1921, CGCM/1896 (1952) and 1961, GC/1941, GC/Alexanderwohl, EMB)

37. C. Henry Smith states that "the essential doctrinal unity of the American Mennonites is evidenced by the adoption of common confessions of faith" (p. 746).

38. It appears to me that the "Anabaptist Vision" as articulated by Harold S. Bender around the motifs of discipleship, the church, and nonresistance has served de facto as a confessional construct for many present-day Mennonites in regard to their spiritual heritage.

39. A consideration of the actual development of Mennonite theology in the confessional tradition tends

to relativize, somewhat at least, the hegemony of the Swiss tradition within Mennonite historical and theological scholarship.

40. We should be reminded here that the Mennonite General Conference (GC) statement of the "Union of all Mennonites of North America" in 1860 issues a strong call for "intimate and fraternal cooperation...among those who still cling to the Mennonite doctrines" for the "purpose of considering ways and means for the unification of all Mennonites of North America, conformable to 1 Cor. 12:12-27." H. P. Krehbiel, History of the Mennonite General Conference, 1898, pp. 55-57.

41. See the J. C. Wenger introduction to the Dordrecht Confession. Also see the conclusion of the M.B. Confession of 1902 and J. A. Toews' comments regarding the noncreedal nature of the MB tradition: "Like their early Anabaptist-Mennonite forefathers, the Mennonite Brethren were biblicists with a kind of intuitive apprehension about creeds and confessions. Hence they have never attached as much weight to them as many other denominations have. To safeguard the brotherhood against the snares of creedalism which can easily develop into a dead and barren orthodoxy, the brethren appended the...conclusion to the 1902 Confession." History of the Mennonite Brethren Church, BCL, 1975, pp. 361-62, 368.

42. In regard to the development of creeds and confessions there are two major forms of ecclesiastical tradition. First, there are the creeds (or the creedal tradition) which developed in the days of the patristic period. The term creed is reserved for the three main formulas of the early church: the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed. These are ecumenical in nature. Secondly, there are the confessions (or the confessional tradition) which usually apply to the theological statements that have come into existence since the days of the Reformation within the Protestant and the Catholic churches. The attempt here, especially in the Protestant tradition, is to justify the separate denominations and focus on the issues that caused divisions. These have tended, as a result, to be comparatively numerous with each denomination having its own statement of belief. Sometimes these are also used for doctrinal summaries of the church in general. Now when Mennonites say that they are noncreedal,

they are saying first of all, that the ecumenical creedal tradition of the patristic period does not have a high level of normativity for them in determining the orthodoxy of their theology, even though on basic doctrines they are generally in agreement with the classical creeds. For Mennonites theology does not consist essentially in systematic reflection on the creeds. Rather it is more directly and self-consciously anchored in the sola scriptura and oriented to a way of life without consciously filtering the word and the walk through the grid of later, so-called normative, theological statements such as the creeds. In this sense Mennonites are noncreedal. Yet this is not the same as saying that we are nonconfessional. We must become far more conscious of the hermeneutical operation of the confessional framework in our theologizing. Like other Protestant traditions Mennonites have been very confessional in producing statements of faith that have characteristically defined their distinctives as a people and as denominations. Relative to their size, Mennonites have produced many confessional statements which have had varying degrees of authority within the different Mennonite branches.

43. Both symbolically and actually the Dordrecht Confession probably is the best example of the strong contribution a confession has made in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, both in Europe and North America.

44. Several factors contribute to recognizing the confessions as a basis for broader dialogue with other Christian traditions: (a) that Mennonites also have a confessional tradition; (b) that this tradition follows classical theology in its essential structure if not always in its content; (c) that the central axis of theology and revelation (the first of the four we have identified), with its focus on the doctrine of God and his word, provides a critical theological bond with the Christian traditions more centrally rooted in classical theology. These confessional statements are symbolic of the deeper belief structures that inhabit any viable religious tradition.

45. "Christ as the foundation" is a central theme in Menno Simons, captured most vividly by the thematic text quoted at the beginning of each of his writings--1 Cor. 3:11. Henry H. Ewert seems to confirm the foundational importance of a soteriologically oriented

Christology when he says that "by no means must the doctrines referred to be regarded as the most important part of our confession of faith; for of most vital importance we consider the doctrine of the salvation of man through the sacrifice of Christ in which doctrine, as well as in most others, we find ourselves in agreement with all Christian denominations.... This confession shall above all remain the living soul of its bearer, the Mennonite church. By rooting herself in it, our church shall maintain her individuality and learn to perceive clearly her mission in this world. It is to be the determining principle, by which new ideas are accepted or rejected. It is not merely to be understood and taught, but above all to be lived up to and followed." The Confession of Faith of the Mennonite Denomination and Its Mission. Trans. from the German (Berne, Ind.: The Mennonite Book Concern, 1901), pp. 23-24; underlining his.

46. The closer one moves to the Anabaptist center of the confessions, namely ecclesiology, the more unanimity there exists between the various individual confession. On the basis of an "influence approach" to the confessional tradition, one would say that the Anabaptist center has remained largely intact. I think that classical orthodoxy is reflected most clearly in the first theological axis, Theology and Revelation; that Pietism has made the greatest impact on the second theological axis, Christology and Salvation; that Fundamentalism has made its greatest impact on the fourth theological axis, Eschatology and Consummation; and that Anabaptism has retained the most in the third and most distinctive central theological axis, Ecclesiology and Mission. This appears to be confirmed by Henry H. Ewert who, in reflecting on Mennonite confessions, states that "the difference between us and other denominations must be sought deeper than in the doctrines referred to. These distinguishing doctrines, when we do not consider their foundation in scripture, may all be traced back to our conception of the church of God, a conception in which we differ fundamentally from all other denominations, particularly in the view we take of the relations of the church to the world" (pp. 3-4; underlining his).

SECTION

TWO

THE CONFESSIONS

THE DORDRECHT/MC
CONFESSIONAL TRADITION

MENNONITE CONFESSION OF FAITH.*

Dordrecht 1632

ARTICLE I.

CONCERNING GOD AND THE CREATION OF ALL THINGS.

Whereas it is declared, that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6), and that "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," therefore we confess with the mouth, and believe with the heart, together with all the pious, according to the Holy Scriptures, that there is one eternal, almighty, and incomprehensible God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and none more and none other, before whom no God existed, neither will exist after him. For from him, through him, and in him are all things. To him be blessing, praise, and honor, for ever and ever. Gen. 17:1; Deut. 6:4; Isaiah 46:9, 1 John 5:7.

In this one God, who "worketh all in all," we believe. Him we confess as the Creator of all things, visible and invisible; who in six days created and prepared "heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." And we further believe, that this God still governs and preserves the same, together with all his works, through his wisdom, his might, and the "word of his power." Gen. 5:1, 2; Acts 14:15; 1 Cor. 12:6; Heb. 1:3.

When he had finished his works and, according to his good pleasure, had ordained and prepared each of them, so that they were right and good according to their nature, being and quality, he created the first man, Adam, the father of all of us, gave him a body formed "of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," so that he "became a living soul," created by God in his own image and likeness," in "righteousness and true holiness" unto eternal life. He also gave him a place above all other creatures and endowed him with many high and excellent gifts, put him into the garden of Eden, and gave him a commandment and an interdiction. Thereupon he took a rib from the side of Adam, made a

woman out of it, brought her to him, and gave her to him as a helpmeet and housewife. Consequently he has caused, that from this first man, Adam, all men who "dwell on the face of the earth," have been begotten and have descended. Gen. 1:27; 2:7, 15, 17, 22; 5:1; Acts 17:26.

ARTICLE II.

THE FALL OF MAN.

We believe and confess, that, according to the purport of the Holy Scriptures, our first parents, Adam and Eve, did not long remain in the happy state in which they were created; but did, after being seduced by the deceit and "subtility" of the serpent, and envy of the devil, violate the high command of God, and became disobedient to their Creator; through which disobedience "sin entered into the world, and death by sin;" so that "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," and thereby incurred the wrath of God and condemnation. For which reason our first parents were, by God, driven out of Paradise, to cultivate the earth, to maintain themselves thereon in sorrow, and to "eat their bread in the sweat of their face," until they "returned to the ground, from which they were taken." And that they did, therefore, through this one sin, so far apostatize, depart, and estrange themselves from God, that they could neither help themselves, nor be helped by any of their descendants, nor by angels, nor by any other creature in heaven or on earth, nor be redeemed or reconciled to God; but would have had to be lost forever, had not God, who pitied his creatures, in mercy, interposed in their behalf, and made provision for their restoration. Gen. 3:6, 23; Rom. 5:12—19; Psalm 47:8, 9; Rev. 5:3; John 3:16.

ARTICLE III.

THE RESTORATION OF MAN THROUGH THE PROMISE OF THE COMING OF CHRIST.

Regarding the restoration of our first parents and their descendants, we believe and confess: That God, notwithstanding their fall, transgression and sin, and although they had no power to help themselves, he was nevertheless not willing that they should be cast off entirely, or be eternally lost; but again called them unto him, comforted them, and showed them that there were yet means with him for their rec-

*This Confession was written and adopted at a Peace Convention held at Dordrecht, on the 21st day of April, 1632, entitled: A Declaration of the Chief Articles of our General Christian Faith.

onciliation; namely, the immaculate Lamb, the Son of God; who "was fore-ordained" to this purpose "before the foundation of the world," and who was promised to them and all their descendants, while they (our first parents) were yet in paradise, for their comfort, redemption, and salvation; yea, who was given to them thenceforward, through faith, as their own; after which all the pious patriarchs, to whom this promise was often renewed, longed and searched, beholding it through faith at a distance, and expecting its fulfillment—expecting that he (the Son of God), would, at his coming, again redeem and deliver the fallen race of man from their sins, their guilt, and unrighteousness. John 1:29; 11:27; 1 Pet. 1:19; Gen. 3:15; 1 John 2:1, 2; 3:8; Gal. 4:4, 5.

ARTICLE IV.

THE ADVENT OF CHRIST INTO THIS WORLD, AND THE REASON OF HIS COMING.

We believe and confess further: That "when the fullness of the time was come," after which all the pious patriarchs so ardently longed, and which they so anxiously awaited—the previously promised Messiah, Redeemer, and Savior, proceeded from God, being sent by him, and, according to the prediction of the prophets and the testimony of the evangelists, came into the world, yea, into the flesh, so that the Word itself thus became flesh and man; and that he was conceived by the Virgin Mary (who was espoused to a man named Joseph, of the house of David), and that she bare him as her first-born son at Bethlehem, "wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger." John 4:25; 16:28; 1 Tim. 3:16; Matt. 1:21; John 1:14; Luke 2:7.

Further, we believe and confess, that this is the same One, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting;" who has "neither beginning of days, nor end of life." Of whom it is testified, that he is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." That this is also he—and none other—who was chosen, promised, and sent; who came into the world; and who is God's only, first, and proper Son; who was before John the Baptist, before Abraham, before the world; yea, who was David's Lord, and who is God of the "whole earth," "the first-born of every creature"; who was sent into the world, and

himself delivered up the body prepared for him, as "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor;" yea, for the comfort, redemption, and salvation of all—of the human race. Micah 5:2; Heb. 7:3; Rev. 1:8; John 3:16; Rom. 8:32; Col. 1:15; Heb. 10:5.

But how, or in what manner, this worthy body was prepared, or how the Word became flesh, and he himself man, we content ourselves with the declaration which the faithful evangelists have given and left in their description thereof; according to which we confess with all the saints, that he is the Son of the living God, in whom exist all our hope, comfort, redemption, and salvation, and which we are to seek in no one else. Luke 1:31—35; John 30:31.

Further, we believe and confess by authority of scripture, that when he had ended his course, and "finished" the work for which he was sent into the world, he was, by the providence of God, delivered into the hands of the unrighteous; suffered under the governor, Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, was buried, rose again from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven, where he now sits at the right hand of the Majesty of God on high;" from whence he will come again to judge the living and the dead. Luke 23:1; 33:53; 24:5, 6, 51.

Thus we believe the Son of God died—"tasted death for every man," shed his precious blood, and thereby bruised the head of the serpent, destroyed the works of the devil, "blotted out the hand-writing," and purchased redemption for the whole human race; and thus he became the source of eternal salvation to all who from the time of Adam to the end of the world, shall have believed in him, and obeyed him. Gen. 3:15; 1 John 3:8; Col. 2:14; Rom. 5:18.

ARTICLE V.

THE LAW OF CHRIST, WHICH IS THE HOLY GOSPEL, OR THE NEW TESTAMENT.

We also believe and confess, that Christ, before his ascension, established and instituted his New Testament and left it to his followers, to be and remain an everlasting testament, which he confirmed and sealed with his own precious blood; and in which he has so highly commended to them, that neither men nor

angels may change it, neither take therefrom nor add thereto. Jer. 31:31; Heb. 9:15—17; Matt. 26:28; Gal. 1:8; 1 Tim. 6:3; Rev. 22:18, 19; Matt. 5:18; Luke 21:33.

And that he has caused this Testament (in which the whole counsel and will of his heavenly Father, so far as these are necessary to the salvation of man, are comprehended), to be proclaimed, in his name, through his beloved apostles, messengers, and servants (whom he chose and sent into all the world for this purpose)—to all nations, people and tongues; these apostles preaching repentance and remission of sins; and that he, in said Testament, caused it to be declared, that all men without distinction, if they are obedient, through faith, follow, fulfill and live according to the precepts of the same, are his children and rightful heirs; having thus excluded none from the precious inheritance of eternal salvation, except the unbelieving and disobedient, the headstrong and unconverted; who despise such salvation; and thus by their own actions incur guilt by refusing the same, and “judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life.” Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46, 47; Rom. 8:17; Acts 13:46.

ARTICLE VI.

REPENTANCE AND AMENDMENT OF LIFE.

We believe and confess, that, as the “imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth,” and consequently inclined to all unrighteousness, sin and wickedness, that, therefore, the first doctrine of the precious New Testament of the Son of God is, Repentance and amendment of life. Gen. 8:21; Mark 1:15. Therefore those who have ears to hear, and hearts to understand, must “bring forth fruits meet for repentance,” amend their lives, believe the gospel, “depart from evil and do good,” desist from wrong and cease from sinning, “put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” For neither *Baptism, Sacrament, nor Church-Fellowship*, nor any other external ceremony, can, without faith, the new birth, and a change or renewal of life, help, or qualify us, that we may please God, or receive any consolation or promise of salvation from him. Luke 3:8; Eph. 4:22, 24; Col. 3:9, 10. But on the contrary, we must go to God “with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith,” and believe in Jesus Christ, as the

scriptures speak and testify of him. Through which faith we obtain the pardon of our sins, become sanctified, justified, and children of God; yea, partakers of his mind, nature and image, as we are born again of God through his incorruptible seed from above. Heb. 10:21, 22; John 7:38; 2 Pet. 1:4.

ARTICLE VII.—HOLY BAPTISM.

Regarding baptism, we confess that all penitent believers, who through faith, the new birth and renewal of the Holy Ghost, have become united with God, and whose names are recorded in heaven, must, on such scriptural confession of their faith, and renewal of life; according to the command and doctrine of Christ, and the example and custom of the apostles, be baptized with water in the ever adorable name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to the burying of their sins, and thus to become incorporated into the communion of the saints; whereupon they must learn to observe all things whatever the Son of God taught, left on record, and commanded his followers to do. Matt. 3:15; 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; 8:12, 38; 9:19; 10:47; 16:33; **Rom.** 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12.

ARTICLE VIII.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

We believe in and confess a visible Church of God, consisting of those, who, as before remarked, have truly repented, and rightly believed; who are rightly baptized, united with God in heaven, and incorporated into the communion of the saints on earth. 1 Cor. 12:13. And these, we confess, are a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation,” who have the testimony that they are the “bride” of Christ; yea, that they are children and heirs of eternal life—a “habitation of God through the Spirit,” built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, of which “Christ himself is the chief corner stone”—the foundation on which his church is built. John 3:29; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:19—21; Tit. 3:7; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19; 2:9. This church of the living God, which he has purchased and redeemed through his own precious blood, and with which he will be—according to his own promise—for her comfort and protection, “always, even unto the end of the world;” yea, will dwell and walk with her, and preserve her, that no “winds” nor “floods,” yea, not even the “gates of hell shall

prevail against her"—may be known by her evangelical faith, doctrine, love, and godly conversation; also by her pure walk and practice, and her observance of the true ordinances of Christ, which he has strictly enjoined on his followers. Matt. 7:25; 16:18; 28:20; 2 Cor. 6:16.

ARTICLE IX.

THE OFFICE OF TEACHERS AND MINISTERS— MALE AND FEMALE—IN THE CHURCH.

Regarding the offices, and election of persons to the same, in the church, we believe and confess: That, as the church cannot exist and prosper, nor continue in its structure, without offices and regulations, that therefore the Lord Jesus has himself (as a father in his house), appointed and prescribed his offices and ordinances, and has given commandments concerning the same, as to how each one should walk therein, give heed to his own work and calling, and do it as it becomes him to do. Eph. 4:11, 12. For he himself, as the faithful and great Shepherd, and Bishop of our souls, was sent into the world, not to wound, to break, or destroy the souls of men, but to heal them; to seek that which is lost, and to pull down the hedges and partition wall, so as to make out of *many one*; thus collecting out of Jews and heathen, yea, out of all nations, a church in his name; for which (so that no one might go astray or be lost) he laid down his own life, and thus procured for them salvation, made them free and redeemed them, to which blessing no one could help them, or be of service in obtaining it. 1 Pet. 2:25; Matt. 18:11; Eph. 2:13, 14; John 10:9, 11, 15.

And that he, besides this, left his church before his departure, provided with faithful ministers, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, whom he had chosen by prayer and supplication through the Holy Spirit, so that they might govern the church, feed his flock, watch over, maintain, and care for the same; yea, do in all things as he left them an example, taught them, and commanded them to do; and likewise to teach the church to observe all things whatsoever he commanded them. Eph. 4:11; Luke 6:12, 13; 10:1; Matt. 28:20.

Also that the apostles were afterwards, as faithful followers of Christ and leaders of the church, diligent in these matters, namely, in choosing through prayer and supplication to

God, brethren who were to provide all the churches in the cities and circuits, with bishops, pastors, and leaders, and to ordain to these offices such men as took "heed unto themselves and unto the doctrine," and also unto the flock; who were sound in the faith, pious in their life and conversation and who had—as well within the church as "without"—a good reputation and a good report; so that they might be a light and example in all godliness and good works; might worthily administer the Lord's ordinances—baptism and sacrament—and that they (the brethren sent by the apostles) might also, at all places, where such were to be had, appoint faithful men as elders, who were able to teach others, confirm them in the name of the Lord "with the laying on of hands," and who (the elders) were to take care of all things of which the church stood in need; so that they, as faithful servants, might well "occupy" their Lord's money, gain thereby, and thus "save themselves and those who hear them." 1 Tim. 3:1; 4:14—16; Acts 1:23, 24; Tit. 1:5; Luke 19:13.

That they should also take good care (particularly each one of the charge over which he had the oversight), that all the circuits should be well provided with almoners, who should have the care and oversight of the poor, and who were to receive gifts and alms, and again faithfully to distribute them amongst the poor saints who were in need, and this in all honesty, as is becoming. Acts 6:3—6.

Also that honorable old widows should be chosen as servants, who, besides the almoners, are to visit, comfort, and take care of the poor, the weak, the afflicted, and the needy, as also to visit, comfort, and take care of widows and orphans; and further to assist in taking care of any matters in the church that properly come within their sphere, according to their best ability. 1 Tim. 5:9, 10; Rom. 16:1, 2.

And as it further regards the almoners, that they (particularly if they are fit persons, and chosen and ordained thereto by the church), may also in aid and relief of the bishops, exhort the church (being, as already remarked, chosen thereto), and thus assist in word and doctrine; so that each one may serve the other from love, with the gift which he has received from the Lord; so that through the common service and assistance of each member, according to his ability, the body of Christ may be edified, and

the Lord's vineyard and church be preserved in its growth and structure. 2 Tim. 2:2.

ARTICLE X.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

We also believe in and observe the breaking of bread, or the Lord's Supper, as the Lord Jesus instituted the same (with bread and wine) before his sufferings, and also observed and ate it with the apostles, and also commanded it to be observed to his remembrance, as also the apostles subsequently taught and observed the same in the church, and commanded it to be observed by believers in commemoration of the death and sufferings of the Lord—the breaking of his worthy body and the shedding of his precious blood—for the whole human race. So is the observance of this sacrament also to remind us of the benefit of the said death and sufferings of Christ, namely, the redemption and eternal salvation which he purchased thereby, and the great love thus shown to sinful man; whereby we are earnestly exhorted also to love one another—to love our neighbor—to forgive and absolve him—even as Christ has done unto us—and also to endeavor to maintain and keep alive the union and communion which we have with God, and amongst one another; which is thus shown and represented to us by the aforesaid breaking of bread. Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; Acts 2:42, 46; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23—26.

ARTICLE XI.

THE WASHING OF THE SAINTS' FEET.

We also confess a washing of the feet of the saints, as the Lord Jesus did not only institute and command the same, but did also himself wash the feet of the apostles, although he was their Lord and master; thereby giving an example that they also should wash one another's feet, and thus do to one another as he did to them; which they also afterwards taught believers to observe, and all this as a sign of true humiliation; but yet more particularly as a sign to remind us of the true washing—the washing and purification of the soul in the blood of Christ. John 13:4—17; 1 Tim. 5:10.

ARTICLE XII.

MATRIMONY.

We also confess that there is in the church of God an "honorable" state of matrimony

between two believers of the different sexes, as God first instituted the same in paradise between Adam and Eve, and as the Lord Jesus reformed it by removing all abuses which had crept into it, and restoring it to its first order. Gen. 1:27; 2:18, 22, 24.

In this manner the apostle Paul also taught and permitted matrimony in the church, leaving it to each one's own choice to enter into matrimony with any person who would unite with him in such state, provided that it was done "in the Lord," according to the primitive order; the words "in the Lord," to be understood, according to our opinion, that just as the patriarchs had to marry amongst their own kindred or generation, so there is also no other liberty allowed to believers under the New Testament Dispensation, than to marry amongst the "chosen generation," or the spiritual kindred of Christ; that is, to such—and none others—as are already, previous to their marriage, united to the church in heart and soul, have received the same baptism, belong to the same church, are of the same faith and doctrine, and lead the same course of life, with themselves. 1 Cor. 7; 9:5; Gen. 24:4, 28:6; Num. 36:6—9. Such are then, as already remarked, united by God and the church according to the primitive order, and this is then called, "Marrying in the Lord." 1 Cor. 7:39.

ARTICLE XIII.

THE OFFICE OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

We also believe and confess, that God has instituted civil government, for the punishment of the wicked and the protection of the pious; and also further, for the purpose of governing the world—governing countries and cities; and also to preserve its subjects in good order and under good regulations. Wherefore we are not permitted to despise, blaspheme, or resist the same; but are to acknowledge it as a minister of God and be subject and obedient to it, in all things that do not militate against the law, will, and commandments of God; yea, "to be ready to every good work;" also faithfully to pay it custom, tax, and tribute; thus giving it what is its due; as Jesus Christ taught, did himself, and commanded his followers to do. That we are also to pray to the Lord earnestly for the government and its welfare, and in behalf of our country, so that we may live

under its protection, maintain ourselves, and "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." And further, that the Lord would recompense them (our rulers), here and in eternity, for all the benefits, liberties, and favors which we enjoy under their laudable administration. Rom. 13:1—7; Tit. 3:1, 2; 1 Pet. 2:17; Matt. 17:27; 22:21; 1 Tim. 2:1, 2.

ARTICLE XIV.

DEFENSE BY FORCE.

Regarding revenge, whereby we resist our enemies with the sword, we believe and confess that the Lord Jesus has forbidden his disciples and followers all revenge and resistance, and has thereby commanded them not to "return evil for evil, nor railing for railing;" but to "put up the sword into the sheath," or, as the prophets foretold, "beat them into ploughshares." Matt. 5:39, 44; Rom. 12:14; 1 Pet. 3:9; Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3.

From this we see, that, according to the example, life, and doctrine of Christ, we are not to do wrong, or cause offense or vexation to any one; but to seek the welfare and salvation of all men; also, if necessity should require it, to flee, for the Lord's sake, from one city or country to another, and suffer the "spoiling of our goods," rather than give occasion of offense to any one; and if we are struck on our "right cheek, rather to turn the other also," than revenge ourselves, or return the blow. Matt. 5:39; 10:23; Rom. 12:19.

And that we are, besides this, also to pray for our enemies, comfort and feed them, when they are hungry or thirsty, and thus by well-doing convince them and overcome the evil with good. Rom. 12:20, 21.

Finally, that we are to do good in all respects, "commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God," and according to the law of Christ, do nothing to others that we would not wish them to do unto us. 2 Cor. 4:2; Matt. 7:12; Luke 6:31.

ARTICLE XV.

THE SWEARING OF OATHS.

Regarding the swearing of oaths, we believe and confess, that the Lord Jesus has dissuaded his followers from and forbidden them the same; that is, that he commanded them to "swear not at all;" but that their "Yea" should be "yea,"

and their "Nay, nay." From which we understand that all oaths, high and low, are forbidden; and that instead of them we are to confirm all our promises and covenants, declarations and testimonies of all matters, merely with "Yea that is yea," and "Nay that is nay;" and that we are to perform and fulfill at all times, and in all things, to every one, every promise and obligation to which we thus affirm, as faithfully as if we had confirmed it with the most solemn oath. And if we thus do, we have the confidence that no one—not even the government itself—will have just cause to require more of us. Matt. 5:34—37; James 5:12; 2 Cor. 1:17.

ARTICLE XVI.

EXCOMMUNICATION OR EXPULSION FROM THE CHURCH.

We also believe in and acknowledge the ban, or excommunication, a separation or spiritual punishment by the church, for the amendment, and not for the destruction, of offenders; so that what is pure may be separated from that which is impure. That is, if a person, after having been enlightened, and received the knowledge of the truth, and has been received into the communion of the saints, does willfully, or out of presumption, sin against God, or commit some other "sin unto death," thereby falling into such unfruitful works of darkness, that he becomes separated from God, and is debarred from his kingdom—that such an one—when his works are become manifest, and sufficiently known to the church—cannot remain in the "congregation of the righteous;" but must, as an offensive member and open sinner, be excluded from the church, "rebuked before all," and "purged out as a leaven," and thus remain until his amendment, as an example and warning to others, and also that the church may be kept pure from such "spots" and "blemishes;" so that not for the want of this, the name of the Lord be blasphemed, the church dishonored, and a stumbling-block thrown in the way of those "without," and finally, that the offender may not be condemned with the world, but that he may again be convinced of the error of his ways, and brought to repentance and amendment of life. Isaiah 59:2; 1 Cor. 5:5, 6, 12; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Cor. 13:10.

Regarding the brotherly admonition, as also the instruction of the erring, we are to "give

all diligence" to watch over them, and exhort them in all meekness to the amendment of their ways (James 5:19, 20); and in case any should remain obstinate and unconverted, to reprove them as the case may require. In short, the church must "put away from among herself him that is wicked," whether it be in doctrine or life.

ARTICLE XVII.

THE SHUNNING OF THOSE WHO ARE EXPULSED.

As regards the withdrawing from, or the shunning of, those who are expelled, we believe and confess, that if any one, whether it be through a wicked life or perverse doctrine—is so far fallen as to be separated from God, and consequently rebuked by, and expelled from, the church, he must also, according to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, be shunned and avoided by all the members of the church (particularly by those to whom his misdeeds are known), whether it be in eating or drinking, or other such like social matters. In short, that we are to have nothing to do with him; so that we may not become defiled by intercourse with him, and partakers of his sins; but that he may be made ashamed, be affected in his mind, convinced in his conscience, and thereby induced to amend his ways. 1 Cor. 5:9—11; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:14; Tit. 3:10.

That nevertheless, as well in shunning as in reproofing such offender, such moderation and Christian discretion be used, that such shunning and reproof may not be conducive to his ruin, but be serviceable to his amendment. For should he be in need, hungry, thirsty, naked, sick or visited by some other affliction, we are in duty bound, according to the doctrine and practice of Christ and his apostles, to render him aid and assistance, as necessity may require; otherwise the shunning of him might be rather conducive to his ruin than to his amendment. 1 Thess. 5:14.

Therefore we must not treat such offenders as enemies, but exhort them as brethren, in order thereby to bring them to a knowledge of their sins and to repentance; so that they may again become reconciled to God and the church, and be received and admitted into the same—thus exercising love towards them, as is becoming. 2 Thess. 3:15.

ARTICLE XVIII.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD AND THE LAST JUDGMENT.

Regarding the resurrection of the dead, we confess with the mouth, and believe with the heart, that according to the scriptures—all men who shall have died or "fallen asleep," will—through the incomprehensible power of God—at the day of judgment, be "raised up" and made alive; and that these, together with all those who then remain alive, and who shall be "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," shall "appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," where the good shall be separated from the evil, and where "every one shall receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad;" and that the good or pious shall then further, as the blessed of their Father, be received by Christ into eternal life, where they shall receive that joy which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man." Yea, where they shall reign and triumph with Christ forever and ever. Matt. 22:30, 31; 25:31; Dan. 12:2; Job 19:25, 26; John 5:28, 29; 1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 4:13.

And that, on the contrary, the wicked or impious, shall, as the accursed of God, be cast into "outer darkness;" yea, into eternal, hellish torments; "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" and where—according to Holy Scripture—they can expect no comfort nor redemption throughout eternity. Isaiah 66:24; Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:46; Rev. 14:11.

May the Lord through his grace make us all fit and worthy, that no such calamity may befall any of us; but that we may be diligent, and so take heed to ourselves, that we may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. Amen.

Now these are, as before mentioned, the chief articles of our general Christian Faith, which we everywhere teach in our congregations and families, and according to which we profess to live; and which, according to our convictions, contain the only true Christian Faith, which the apostles in their time believed and taught; yea, which they testified to by their lives and confirmed by their deaths; in which we will also, according to our weakness, gladly abide, live, and die, that at last, together with the apostles and all the pious we may obtain the salvation of our souls through the grace of God.

Thus were the foregoing articles of faith adopted and concluded by our united churches in the city of Dort, in Holland, on the 21st day of April, in the year of our Lord 1632, and signed by the following ministers and teachers.

DORT.	HARLEM.
Isaac Koenig, Johann Cobryssen, Jan Jacobs, Jacuis Terwen, Claes Dirksen, Mels Gysbaerts, Adrian Cornelis.	John Doom, Peter Gryspeer, Dirk Wouters Kolenkamp, Peter Joosten.
	BOMMEL.
	Wilhelm Jan von Exselt, Gispert Spiering.
FLISSINGEN.	ROTTERDAM.
Dillaert Willeborts, Jacob Pennen, Lieven Marymehr.	Balten Centen Schumacher, Michael Michiels, Israel von Halmael, Heinrich Dirkse Apeldoren, Andreas Lucken.
AMSTERDAM.	SCHIEDAM.
Tobias Goverts, Peter Jansen Mayer, Abram Dirks, David ter Haer, Peter Jan von Zingel.	Cornelis Bom, Lambrecht Paeldink.
MIDDLEBURG.	LEYDEN.
Bastian Willemsen, Jan Winkelmans.	Christian de Kopink, Jan Weyns.
BLOCKZYL.	CREVELDT.
Claes Claesson, Peter Peterson.	Herman op den Graff, Wilhelm Kreynen.
ZIRICZEE.	ZEALAND.
Anton Cornelis, Peter Jan Zimmerman.	Cornelis de Moir, Isaac Claes.
UTRECHT.	GORCUM.
Herman Segers, Jan Heinrich Hochfeld, Daniel Horens, Abraham Spronk, Wilhelm von Brockhuysen.	Jacob von Sebrecht, Jan J. von Kruysen.
	ARNHEIM.
	Cornelis Jans, Dirk Renderson.

FROM THE UPPER COUNTRY.

Peter von Borsel, Anton Hans.

Besides this confession being adopted by so many churches, and signed by their ministers, all the churches in Alsace and Germany afterwards adopted it unanimously. Wherefore it was translated from the Holland into the languages of these countries—into French and German—for the use of the churches there, and for others, of which this may serve as a notice.

The following attestation was signed by the brethren in Alsace, who examined this confession and adopted it as their own.

We, the undersigned, ministers of the word of God, and elders of the church in Alsace, hereby declare and make known, that being assembled this 4th of Feb. in the year of our Lord 1660, at Ohnenheim, on account of the Confession of Faith, which was adopted at the Peace Convention in the city of Dort, on the 21st day of April in the year 1632; and having examined the same, and found it, according to our judgment, in agreement with the word of God, we have entirely adopted it as our own. Which we, in testimony of the truth, and a firm faith, have signed with our own hands, as follows:

MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
MAGENHEIM.	MARKIRCH.
John Miller.	Jacob Schmidt,
HEIDELHEIM.	Bertram Hablich.
John Ringer.	OHNENHEIM.
BALDENHEIM.	Ulrich Husser,
Jacob Schebly.	Jacob Gochnauer.
ISENHEIM.	JEPSENHEIM.
Henry Schneider.	John Rudolph Bumen.
KUNENHEIM.	DUERRSANZENHEIM.
Rudolph Egli.	Jacob Schneider.
MARKIRCH.	KUNENHEIM.
Adolph Schmidt.	Henry Frick.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE FOREGOING 18 ARTICLES.

From an authentic circular letter of the year 1557, from the Highland to the Netherland churches, it appears that from the Eyfelt to Moravia there were 50 churches, of which some consisted of from 500 to 600 brethren. And that there were about that time, at a conference at Strasburg, about 50 preachers and elders present, who discoursed about matters concerning the welfare of the churches.

These leaders of the non-resistant Christians endeavored earnestly to propagate the truth; so that like a "grain of mustard seed," of small beginning, it grew against all bloody persecution, to the height in which it is to be seen in so many large churches in Germany, Prussia, the Principality of Cleves, &c., and particularly in the United Netherlands.

But finally, alas! there arose disunion amongst them about matters of faith, which so deeply grieved the peaceably disposed amongst them, that they not only thought about means to heal the schism, and restore union, but did also take the matter in hand, and concluded at Cologne, in the year 1591, a laudable peace between the Highland and Netherland churches. Still the schism was not fully healed. Consequently in the years 1628 and 1630, it was deemed necessary at a certain conference, by some lovers of peace to appoint another conference, in order to see whether they could come to an understanding, and the schism be fully healed. Consequently, in order to attain this object in the most effectual manner, there assembled at Dort, from many of the churches in Holland, on the 21st of April, 1632, fifty-one ministers of the word of God, appointed for said purpose; who deemed it advisable that a scriptural confession of faith should be drawn up, to which all parties should adhere, and on which this peace convention and the intended union should be founded and built. Which was then accordingly drawn up, publicly adopted, confirmed, signed, the so much wished for peace obtained, and the light again put on the candlestick, to the honor of the non-resistant Christianity.

Christian Fundamentals

Articles of Faith

In recent years conditions in the realm of Christian activity and doctrine are such that the Church must place a distinct emphasis on the principles of the Christian faith and Christian living. Particular doctrines of the Church have been attacked and there has been much compromising with the world on matters of Christian living.

Because of these conditions the Mennonite General Conference in session at Garden City, Missouri, August 24-26, 1921, gave expression to the faith of the Church in relation to these conditions in a statement of doctrine pertaining to the fundamentals of the Christian faith. This statement does not supersede the eighteen articles of the Dort Confession, which the Church still confesses and teaches. It is rather a restatement of that confession in the light of present religious contentions and teachings. It gives expression to some of the doctrines and practices of the early Church which at that time were not a matter of difference, but have since the time of the Dort Confession been questioned or denied by many church organizations. For the sake of preserving the faith and teaching the Gospel as given by Christ and His apostles the Church has confessed in this formal manner her faith in and practice of the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE I. OF THE WORD OF GOD

We believe in the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God; that it is authentic in its matter, authoritative in its counsels, inerrant in the original writings, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Ex. 4:12; II Sam. 23:2; Psalms 12:6; 119:160; Jer. 1:9; Matt. 5:18; 24:35; II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:20, 21.

ARTICLE II. OF THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD

We believe that there is but one God, eternal, infinite, perfect, and unchangeable, who exists and reveals Himself in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Deut. 6:4; Psalms 90:2; Gen. 17:1; Psalms 147:5; 139:7-12; Isa. 40:28; 57:15; Mal. 3:6; Gen. 1:2, 18; Heb. 1:8.

ARTICLE III. OF THE CREATION

We believe that the Genesis account of the Creation is an historic fact and literally true. Gen. 1:1, 21, 27; Ex. 20:11; Mk. 10:6-9; Heb. 1:10; 4:4; 11:13.

ARTICLE IV. OF THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created by an immediate act of God, in His own image and after His likeness; that by one act of disobedience he became sinful

in his nature, spiritually dead, subject to physical death and to the power of the devil, from which fallen condition he was unable to save himself. Gen. 1:26, 27; 2:7, 16, 17; 3:1-7; Eph. 2:1-3, 12; Jno. 6:44; Rom. 5:6.

ARTICLE V. OF JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin—the perfect God-man; that He was without sin, the divinely appointed substitute and representative of sinful man, paying the penalty for man's sins by His death on the cross, making the only adequate atonement for sin by the shedding of His blood, thus reconciling man to God; that He was raised from the dead, ascended to glory, and "ever liveth to make intercession for us." Jno. 1:1, 14, 18; Heb. 1:8; 13:8; Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:20-25; Isa. 53:5, 6; II Cor. 5:14, 21; Gal. 3:13; I Pet. 2:22, 24; 3:18; Rom. 5:8-10; Matt. 28:6; Acts 3:24; 10:39-41; 17:31; I Cor. 15:20; Acts 1:11; Eph. 1:19, 20; Rev. 1:18; Col. 3:1; Heb. 6:20; I Jno. 2:1, 2; Heb. 7:25.

ARTICLE VI. OF SALVATION

We believe that man is saved alone by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ; that he is justified from all things on the ground of His shed blood; that through the new birth he becomes a child of God, partaker of eternal life and blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. Eph. 2:8; Rom. 3:20-26; Acts 13:38, 39; Jno. 1:12, 13; 3:4, 8, 16; 5:24; Eph. 1:3.

ARTICLE VII. OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit; that He convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that He indwells and comforts the believer, guides him into all truth, empowers for service and enables him to live a life of righteousness. Acts 5:3, 4; II Cor. 3:3, 17; Jno. 16:7, 8, 13; I Cor. 3:16; Gal. 4:6; Acts 1:8; Rom. 8:1-4.

ARTICLE VIII. OF ASSURANCE

We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to know that they have passed from death unto life; that God is able to keep them from falling, but that the obedience of faith is essential to the maintenance of one's salvation and growth in grace. I Jno. 3:14; 5:13; Rom. 8:16; II Cor. 12:9; Jude 24, 25; Rom. 16:25, 26; 1:5; Gal. 3:11; Jno. 8:31, 32; II Pet. 1:5-11.

ARTICLE IX. OF THE CHURCH

We believe that the Church is the body of Christ, composed of all those who through repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been born again and were baptized by one Spirit into one body, and that it is her divinely appointed mission to preach the Gospel to every creature, teaching obedience to all His commandments. Matt.

16:18; Eph. 1:23; Col. 1:18; Acts 20:21; Luke 24:47; Acts 17:30; 16:31; Gal. 3:26; I Cor. 12:13; Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8.

ARTICLE X. OF SEPARATION

We believe that we are called with a holy calling to a life of separation from the world and its follies, sinful practices, and methods; further that it is the duty of the Church to keep herself aloof from all movements which seek the reformation of society independent of the merits of the death of Christ and the experience of the new birth. I Pet. 2:9; Tit. 2:11-14; II Cor. 6:14-18; Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 5:11; I Jno. 2:15-17; II Thess. 2:6; Acts 4:12; Jno. 3:3, 6, 7.

ARTICLE XI. OF DISCIPLINE

We believe that the Lord has vested the Church with authority in accordance with Scriptural teaching: (1) to choose officials, (2) to regulate the observance of ordinances, (3) to exercise wholesome discipline, and (4) to organize and conduct her work in a manner consistent with her high calling and essential to her highest efficiency. Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-3; II Tim. 2:2; Tit. 1:5-9; 2:15; Matt. 28:19, 20; 18:15-18; Eph. 4:11-16; Heb. 13:17; Acts 14:21-23; 2:15.

ARTICLE XII. OF ORDINANCES

We believe that Christian baptism should be administered upon confession of faith; that the Lord's Supper should be observed as a memorial of His death by those of like precious faith who have peace with God; that feetwashing as an ordinance should be literally observed by all believers; that Christian women praying or prophesying should have their heads covered; that the salutation of the holy kiss should be duly and appropriately observed by all believers; that anointing with oil should be administered to the sick who call for it in faith; that marriage between one man and one woman is a divine institution dissoluble only by death, that on the part of a Christian it should be "only in the Lord" and that consistency requires that the marriage relation be entered only by those of like precious faith. Luke 22:19, 20; I Cor. 11:23-28; Acts 2:38; 8:12; 18:8; Jno. 13:1-7; I Cor. 11:2-16; 16:20; Jas. 5:14-16; Mark 10:6-12; Rom. 7:2; I Cor. 7:39; Amos 3:3.

ARTICLE XIII. OF RESTRICTIONS

We believe that all Christians should honor, pray for, pay tribute to, and obey in all things those who are in authority in state and nation, provided however, that should instances arise in which such obedience would violate the higher law of God "we ought to obey God rather than man," that Church and State are separate, and while believers are to be subject to, they are not a part of the civil, administrative powers; that it is contrary to the teachings of Christ and the apostles to engage in carnal warfare; that Christians should "adorn themselves in modest apparel, . . . not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;" that the swearing of oaths

is forbidden in the New Testament Scriptures; that secret orders are antagonistic to the tenor and spirit of the Gospel; and that life insurance is inconsistent with filial trust in the providence and care of our heavenly Father. I Pet. 2:13, 14, 17; Rom. 13:1-7; I Tim. 2:1, 2; Acts 5:29; Matt. 22:21; Mark 10:42-44; Jno. 18:36; II Cor. 10:4; I Tim. 2:9, 10; I Pet. 3:3-5; Matt. 5:34-37; Jas. 5:12; Jno. 18:20; Eph. 5:11, 12; I Jno. 3:17; Gal. 6:10; Jer. 49:11; Eph. 1:22, 23.

ARTICLE XIV. OF APOSTASY

We believe that the latter days will be characterized by general lawlessness and departure from the faith; that on the part of the world "iniquity shall abound" and "evil men shall wax worse and worse"; that on the part of the Church there will be a falling away and "the love of many shall wax cold"; that false teachers shall abound, both deceiving and being deceived; and further, that present conditions indicate that we are now living in these perilous times. I Tim. 4:1, 2; Rom. 16:17, 18; II Tim. 3:1-5, 13; II Pet. 2:1, 2, 10; Matt. 24:11, 12; II Thess. 2:3.

ARTICLE XV. OF THE RESURRECTION

We believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the bodily resurrection of all men, both of the just and the unjust—of the just to the resurrection of life, and of the unjust to the resurrection of condemnation. Jno. 20:20, 24-29; Luke 24:30, 31; I Cor. 15:42-44; Acts 24:15; Jno. 5:28, 29; I Cor. 15:20-23.

ARTICLE XVI. OF THE COMING OF CHRIST

We believe in the personal, imminent coming of our Lord as the blessed hope of the believer; that we who are alive and remain, together with the dead in Christ who will be raised, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and thus ever be with the Lord. John 14:2, 3; Acts 1:11; Matt. 24:44; Heb. 10:37; Tit. 2:11-13; I Thess. 4:13-18.

ARTICLE XVII. OF THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

We believe that in the interval between death and resurrection, the righteous will be with Christ in a state of conscious bliss and comfort, but that the wicked will be in a place of torment, in a state of conscious suffering and despair. Luke 16:19-31; 23:43; Phil. 1:23; II Cor. 5:1-8; I Thess. 5:10; II Pet. 2:9(R.V.).

ARTICLE XVIII. OF THE FINAL STATE

We believe that hell is the place of torment, prepared for the devil and his angels, where with them the wicked will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire forever and ever, and that heaven is the final abode of the righteous, where they will dwell in the fulness of joy forever and ever. Matt. 25:41, 46; Jude 7; Heb. 14:8-11; 20:10, 15; II Cor. 5:21; Rev. 21:3-8; 22:1-5.

MENNONITE CONFESSION OF FAITH

Adopted by Mennonite General Conference

August 22, 1963

Preamble

The Mennonite Church, begun in Switzerland in 1525, was a part of the Reformation which attempted to restore the New Testament church. We conceive the church to be a body of regenerated believers, a fellowship of holy pilgrims baptized upon confession of faith in Christ. As committed believers we seek to follow the way of Christian love and nonresistance, and to live separate from the evil of the world. We earnestly endeavor to make Christian disciples of all the nations.

In its beliefs the Mennonite Church is bound ultimately to the Holy Scriptures, not to any human formulation of doctrine. We regard this present confession as a restatement of the Eighteen Articles adopted at Dordrecht in the Netherlands in 1632 and of the other statements adopted by our church. In this expression of our faith we sincerely accept the lordship of Jesus Christ and the full authority of the written Word of God, the Bible, and seek to promote the unity of the brotherhood, to safeguard sound doctrine and life, and to serve as a testimony to others.

ARTICLE 1. GOD AND HIS ATTRIBUTES

We believe in almighty God, the eternal Spirit who is infinite in His attributes of holiness, love, righteousness, truth, power, goodness, and mercy. This one and only God has revealed Himself as existing eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Father

We believe that God is the Creator of all things, a God of providence, and the Author of our salvation through Christ. Although He is too great to be comprehended by the human mind, through Christ we can truly know Him. In redeeming love He entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham, later with the people of Israel, and has now made through Christ an eternal covenant in which He offers to the human race the forgiveness of sins and the blessings of divine sonship to those who will repent and believe.

The Son

We believe in Jesus Christ the divine Son of God, who was with the Father from all eternity, who for our salvation took upon Himself human nature, and who by His redemptive death and resurrection conquered the forces of sin and Satan and atoned for the sins of mankind. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, and in

God's redemptive purpose was crucified. He rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now as Lord and Christ at the right hand of the Father intercedes for the saints. He is the Lord and Saviour of all Christian believers, and the coming judge of the living and the dead. We believe in His full deity and full humanity according to the Scriptures.

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who was sent by the Father and the Son to bring to individuals the redemption of Christ. We believe in His personality as set forth in the Scriptures: that He loves, searches, testifies, guides, empowers, and intercedes for the saints.

Deuteronomy 6:4, 5; Matthew 22:37; John 1:18; 3:16; Romans 8:1-17; 11 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 11:6.*

ARTICLE 2. DIVINE REVELATION

We believe that the God of creation and redemption has revealed Himself and His will for men in the Holy Scriptures, and supremely and finally in His incarnate Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. God's purpose in this revelation is the salvation of all men. Although God's power and deity are revealed in His creation, so that the nations are without excuse, this knowledge of Him cannot save men, for it cannot make Christ known. God revealed Himself in saving word and deed to Israel as recorded in the Old Testament; He fulfilled this revelation of Himself in the word and deed of Christ as recorded in the New Testament. We believe that all

*Scriptures cited after each article are representative, but not exhaustive. Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, that men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. We accept the Scriptures as the authoritative Word of God, and through the Holy Spirit as the infallible Guide to lead men to faith in Christ and to guide them in the life of Christian discipleship.

We believe that the Old Testament and the New Testament together constitute the Word of God, that the Old Covenant was preparatory, that its institutions were temporary in character, and that the New Covenant in Christ is the fulfillment of the Old. We believe that the Old Testament writings are inspired and profitable, and as the divine word of promise are to be interpreted in conjunction with the divine act of fulfillment recorded in the New. Christian doctrine and practice are based upon the whole Word of God, the word of promise of the Old Covenant as fulfilled in the New.

The message of the Bible points to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to Him that the Scriptures of the Old Testament bear witness, and He is the One whom the Scriptures of the New Testament proclaim. He is the key to the proper understanding of the entire Bible.

Psalms 19; Luke 24:27, 44; John 1:1-16; 20:31; Romans 1:19, 20; 11 Timothy 3:15, 16; Hebrews 1:1, 2; 8:6, 7; 1 John 1:1-5.

ARTICLE 3

GOD'S CREATION AND PROVIDENCE

We believe that in the beginning God created all things by His Son, and that all existence is therefore finite and dependent upon God, the Source and End of all things visible and invisible. He created man in His

own image, which set man apart from the animal creation. In free will, moral character, superior intellect, and spiritual nature, man bore the image of his Creator.

In His providence God is concerned with the lives of His children, and in everything works for their eternal good. He hears and answers their prayers. By Jesus Christ He upholds the entire creation. He is Sovereign over all things, but He is not the author of sin. He has endowed man with the power of self-determination, and He holds him responsible for his moral choices.

Genesis 1:1, 26, 27; Psalm 139:7-12; Matthew 10:29; John 1:3; Romans 8:28; Colossians 1:16, 17; James 5:16.

ARTICLE 4. MAN AND HIS SIN

We believe that God created man sinless and holy, and subjected man to a moral test as a means of bringing him to full spiritual maturity. Man yielded, however, to the temptation of Satan and by willful disobedience to God failed to maintain that holy condition in which he had been created. This sin brought depravity and death to the race. Although men are sinners by nature because of Adam's fall, they are not guilty of his sin. Those who perish eternally do so only because of their own sin. The most grievous sin is the stubborn refusal to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. As a fallen creature man is self-centered, self-willed, rebellious toward God, unwilling to yield to Christ, unable to break with sin, and under divine judgment.

We believe that children are born with a nature which will manifest itself as sinful as they mature. When they come to know themselves to be responsible to God, they must repent and believe in Christ in order to be saved. Before the age when children are accountable to God, their sins are atoned for through the sacrifice of Christ. Jesus Himself assured us that children are in the kingdom of God.

Genesis 1:27, 31; 3:1-19; Matthew 18:1-14; Luke 18:16; Romans 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:10.

ARTICLE 5. CHRIST, THE SAVIOUR FROM SIN

We believe that there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. The purpose of the incarnation of God's eternal Son was to redeem men from sin and death, to destroy the power and works of the devil, and to reconcile men to God. As a prophet, the Lord Jesus not only proclaimed God's Word; He was in His very person the Word of God. As a priest, He Himself was the sacrifice for sin, and now makes intercession with the Father for the saints. As our risen Lord and King He is vested with all authority in heaven and on earth.

In His life the Lord Jesus demonstrated perfectly the will of God. Although tempted in all points as we are, yet He never sinned. Through the shedding of His blood He inaugurated the New Covenant, broke the power of sin for those who exercise faith in Him, and triumphed over Satan. By His resurrection from the dead, Christ accomplished the full justification of those who believe in Him. By faith each believer is united with the risen and glorified Christ, the Lord of glory.

Luke 19:10; John 1:1; Acts 2:33; Romans 5:11; 11 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 2:15; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 2:14, 15; 4:15; 7:11.

ARTICLE 6

SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

We believe that men are saved, not by character, law, good works, or ceremonies, but by the grace of God. The merits of the death and resurrection of Christ are adequate for the salvation of all men, are offered to all, and are intended for all. Salvation is appropriated by faith in Christ. From all eternity God knew who would be the believers in Christ, and these persons foreknown as believers are elect according to the foreknowledge of God. Those who repent and believe in Christ as Saviour and Lord receive the gift of righteousness, are born again, and are adopted into the family of God. Saving faith involves the giving of the self to Christ, a full surrender of the will, a confident trust in Him, a joyful obedience to His Word as a faithful disciple, and an attitude of love to all men. It is the privilege of every believer to have the assurance of salvation. The God who saves is also able to keep each believer unto a happy end in Christ. As long as the believer lives, he stands in need of the forgiveness, cleansing, and grace of Christ.

John 3:16; 10:27-29; Romans 4; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 1:8-10; 5:13; Jude 24.

ARTICLE 7

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

We believe that Christ as Lord and Saviour does His work through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin. Through the Holy Spirit those who believe are born again. The supreme ministry of the Spirit is to lead men to Christ and His salvation. As Christians yield to Christ and obey His Word, the Holy Spirit transforms them into the spiritual image of Jesus Christ, and enables perseverance in faith and holiness. He empowers them as effective witnesses to Christ and His salvation, fills their hearts with love for all men, and moves them to practice Christian discipleship. The Holy Spirit bestows upon each believer such gifts as He wills for the building up of the body of Christ. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is God's seal of ownership of the Christian believer. He is God's guarantee that He will also redeem the bodies of believers on the day of Christ.

John 16:7-15; Acts 1:8; 2:1-21; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:19; 12:11-13; chapters 12 to 14; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 1:13, 14; 5:30.

ARTICLE 8. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Nature

We believe that God's redemptive work in history has led to the establishment of the Christian church. Christ established His church when He poured out His Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In preparation for this church He entered into covenant relationships with Abraham and his seed. Today the spiritual "seed of Abraham" are those who have faith in Christ, the people of God, the body of Christ, composed of believers from all races and nations. The church is the fellowship of those who are in the kingdom of Christ, the assembly of those who believe in Him, the brotherhood of the saints. The church is corporately the dwelling place of God in the Spirit, His holy temple. It is the visible body of those who are Christian disciples. Membership in the church is dependent upon a voluntary response to God's offer of salvation in Christ.

The primary unit of the church is the local assembly

of believers. It is in the congregation that the work of teaching, witnessing, and disciplining is carried on. In order to maintain the unity of the church it is Scriptural and profitable for congregational representatives to meet together in conferences. The concern for the welfare of the whole church calls for Spirit-led conferences to assist local congregations in maintaining Biblical standards of faith, conduct, stewardship, and missions. The decisions of such conferences should be respected by the individual congregations and members.

Function

It is the function of the church to demonstrate to the world the will of God, to witness to all men of the saving power and intention of God in Christ, and to make disciples of all the nations. The church seeks to lead all men to the obedience of faith. Believers unite in the church for instruction and nurture, for worship, for inclusion in the witnessing and evangelizing body of Christ, for the observance of the ordinances, for Christian fellowship, and for the discipline of the Word and the Spirit of God. The Spirit leads the church to discover the gifts which He has bestowed upon the members for the building up of the body. The church has the obligation to speak authoritatively on God's will. It shall listen to the Word of God and obey it in the moral and spiritual conflicts of each era of history.

The church is called to be a brotherhood under the lordship of Jesus Christ, a loving fellowship of brethren and sisters who are concerned for the total welfare, both spiritual and material, of one another. This concern results in the attempt to help the erring brother find the right path; it includes sharing generously both financial aid and the word of encouragement, and a willingness to give and receive counsel.

Discipline

We believe that the Lord Jesus has given authority to His church to exercise discipline. The purposes of discipline are to lead each member to full stature in Christ, to restore to full fellowship the members who fall into sin, to clarify for all members the meaning of Christian discipleship, to promote the purity of the church, to warn the weak and immature of the serious character of sin and disobedience to God's Word, and to maintain the good name and witness of the church before the world. In this work the church employs public teaching, private counseling, intercessory prayer, earnest warning and rebuke, and sympathetic encouragement. If disobedience persists, the church may withhold the right to commune until the individual repents. And the church must, with a deep sense of loss, recognize that the one who goes on to full apostasy and spiritual ruin has severed his relation with Christ and His body. The standard in church discipline is the Word of God as interpreted by the brotherhood. The entire congregation should share in the work of discipline and seek earnestly to win the fallen member.

Ceremonies and Practices

The Lord Jesus and His apostles instituted ordinances for the church to observe permanently as symbols of Christian truths. The apostolic church literally observed them. Among these are baptism with water, the communion of the Lord's Supper, the washing of the saints' feet, the holy kiss, the laying-on of hands in ordination, the veiling of Christian women, the anointing of the sick with oil, and the institution of Christian marriage. When the church observes ordinances as ex-

pressions of a heart of faith, divine blessings are received, and a Christian witness is given.

Since the Lord Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week, the Christian church, following apostolic precedent, observes the first day of each week in memory of the Lord's resurrection.

The Church and Healing

We believe that the church should exercise a ministry of prayer for those who are in need. Prayer for the sick may be accompanied by a symbolic anointing with oil by the elders of the church. In response to the prayer of faith, and in accordance with His will, God heals in various ways, through the use of the healing arts, or by direct intervention. When healing does not occur, we believe that God's grace is sufficient. The full redemption of the body will come only at the return of Christ.

Exodus 2:24; 24:8; Matthew 5:13, 14, 23, 24; 18:15-18; 28:19, 20; Acts 15; I Corinthians 3:16, 17; 5:11-13; II Corinthians 2:6-11; 3:2; 12:9; Galatians 3:6-9; 6:1; Ephesians 2:11-22; 4:13; I Timothy 5:20; James 2:14-17; 5:14-16; I Peter 2:9.

ARTICLE 9

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH TO SOCIETY

We believe that Christ has commissioned the church to go into all the world and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe His commandments. Jesus entrusted to the church the stewardship of the Gospel, and promised the power of the Holy Spirit for the work of evangelism and missions. This ministry of reconciliation is inherent in the very nature of the church. The church is interested not only in the spiritual welfare of men but in their total well-

being. Jesus Himself fed the hungry, healed the sick, and had compassion on the poor. The church should likewise minister to those who are in physical or social need and to those who are physically or emotionally ill. The church should witness against racial discrimination, economic injustice, and all forms of human slavery and moral degradation.

Amos 5:21-24; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 6:56; Romans 1:16; 8:23.

ARTICLE 10. THE MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

We believe that it is the intention of Christ that there should be shepherds in His congregations to feed the flock, to serve as leaders, to expound the Word of God, to administer the ordinances, to exercise, in co-operation with the congregation, a Scriptural church discipline, and in general to function as servants of the church. Ordination is accompanied by a laying-on of hands, symbolic of the church assigning responsibility and of God imparting strength for the assignment. In addition to the primary office of apostle, in the New Testament church there were such gifts as prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. The early church had regional overseers such as Timothy, and bishops (pastors) and deacons in the local congregations. Upon the pastors lay the responsibility for the leadership and pastoral care of the congregations, and the deacons served as their helpers. In each era of the life of the church, Christ through His Spirit seeks to lead the church to adapt its organization to the needs of time and place. The church is a brotherhood, and its organizational structure should insure the full participation of the members with their spiritual gifts in its life and discipline. It is the duty of

the church to give financial support to those whom it asks to serve as evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

Matthew 23:8; 28:19; Acts 15:6; 20:28; I Corinthians 5:4, 5; 9:14; Ephesians 4:11, 12; Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-13; 4:14; II Timothy 4:12; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 5:2, 3.

ARTICLE 11. CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

We believe in obeying the instruction of the Lord Jesus to baptize believers with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In order to qualify for baptism one must repent, turn to Christ in sincere faith, and accept Him as Lord. We regard water baptism as an ordinance of Christ which symbolizes the baptism of the Holy Spirit, divine cleansing from sin and its guilt, identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and the commitment to follow Him in a life of faithful discipleship. Since baptism with the Holy Spirit is a pouring out, we generally practice pouring as our mode of water baptism.

Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:16-21; 22:16; Romans 6:4-6; I Corinthians 12:13; I Peter 3:21.

ARTICLE 12. THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe in observing the communion of the Lord's Supper as an ordinance instituted by Jesus Christ to symbolize the New Covenant. We recognize the bread and the cup as symbols commemorating Christ's broken body and shed blood, of our spiritual life in Him, and of the spiritual unity and fellowship of the body of Christ. Each believer shall examine himself so as not to partake of the sacred emblems carelessly or while living in sin. The church shall invite to the Lord's table only those who have peace with God and with their fellow men, and who share the faith of the church. The Lord's Supper shall be observed faithfully until the Lord comes.

Luke 22:19, 20; I Corinthians 5:13; 10:16, 17; 11:24, 26.

ARTICLE 13 SYMBOLS OF CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD

We believe in the observance of the washing of the saints' feet as an ordinance instituted by the Lord Jesus. By His example Christ rebuked the pride and rivalry of the apostles and showed them that Christian discipleship involves obedience to His lordship and loving service. This ordinance reminds us of the brotherhood character of the church, of our mutual duty to serve and admonish one another, and of our need for continuous cleansing in our daily walk. In the New Testament the holy kiss and the right hand of fellowship are also symbols of Christian love in the church of Christ.

Luke 22:24; John 13:1-17; Romans 16:16; Galatians 2:9; I Timothy 5:10.

ARTICLE 14. SYMBOLS OF CHRISTIAN ORDER

We believe that in their relation to the Lord men and women are equal, for in Christ there is neither male nor female. But in the order of creation God has fitted man and woman for differing functions; man has been given a primary leadership role, while the woman is especially fitted for nurture and service. Being in Christ does not nullify these natural endowments, either in the home or in the church. The New Testament symbols of man's headship are to be his short hair and uncovered head

while praying or prophesying, and the symbols of woman's role are her long hair and her veiled head. The acceptance by both men and women of the order of creation in no way limits their rightful freedom, but rather ensures their finding the respective roles in which they can most fruitfully and happily serve.

Genesis 2:18-25; I Corinthians 11:2-16; Galatians 3:28.

ARTICLE 15. MARRIAGE AND THE HOME

We believe that at the beginning of human history God instituted marriage. He ordained that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and that the two shall become one in love and mutual submission. It is God's will that marriage be a holy state, monogamous, and for life. It is also fully acceptable to God to serve Christ unmarried. Marriage was instituted for the happiness of the husband and wife and for the procreation and Christian nurture of children. Christians shall marry only in the Lord, and for the sake of spiritual unity in the home they should become members of the same congregation. The Christian home ought regularly to have family worship, to seek faithfully to live according to the Word of God, and to support loyally the church in its mission. We believe it is appropriate for parents to pledge themselves to the faithful Christian nurture of their children.

Genesis 1:27, 28; 2:24; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Ephesians 6:1, 4.

ARTICLE 16 DISCIPLESHIP AND NONCONFORMITY

We believe that there are two opposing kingdoms to which men give their spiritual allegiance, that of Christ and that of Satan. Those who belong to Satan's kingdom live for sin and self, and refuse the obedience of faith. The kingdom of Christ is composed of those who have been born again and who have entered into a faith union with the Lord Jesus Christ. In them the fruit of the Spirit is in evidence. They recognize the lordship of Christ, and perform all manner of good works. They seek for holiness of heart, life, and speech, and refuse any unequal yoke with unbelievers. They manifest only love toward those of other races, cultures, and economic levels. They regard their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit and crucify their flesh with its affections and lusts. They therefore avoid such things as harmful drugs, beverage alcohol, and tobacco. We believe that their adornment should be a beauty of spirit, expressed in attire that is modest, economical, simple, and becoming to those professing Christian faith. They should seek to be Christian in their stewardship of money and possessions. Their recreational life should be consistent with the Christian walk. Through the Spirit they should put off the old man and put on the new.

Matthew 7:13, 14; Luke 9:23-26; Romans 12:1, 2; I Corinthians 6:12, 19; II Corinthians 6:14-18; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 4:20-32; Colossians 1:13; I Timothy 2:9, 10; I Peter 3:3, 4.

ARTICLE 17. CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY

We believe that it is a major Christian obligation to be strictly truthful and transparent in life and doctrine, with no secrecy or hypocrisy. The Lord Jesus Christ has forbidden to His followers the use of any and all oaths, because of the finite limitations of human beings, and the obligation always to speak the truth. In legal

matters we therefore simply affirm the truth. We are opposed to membership in secret societies or lodges, because such membership would involve an unequal yoke with unbelievers, and because these organizations employ hierarchical titles, require oaths, stand for organized secrecy, and may offer salvation on grounds other than faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that it is in the church that we should find love, fellowship, and security.

Matthew 5:33-37; 23:7-10, 16-22; John 18:20; Acts 4:12; II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; James 5:12.

ARTICLE 18. LOVE AND NONRESISTANCE

We believe that it is the will of God for His children to follow Christian love in all human relationships. Such a life of love excludes retaliation and revenge. God pours His love into the hearts of Christians so that they desire the welfare of all men. The supreme example of nonresistance is the Lord Jesus Himself. The teaching of Jesus not to resist him who is evil requires the renunciation by His disciples of all violence in human relations. Only love must be shown to all men. We believe that this applies to every area of life: to personal injustice, to situations in which people commonly resort to litigation, to industrial strife, and to international tensions and wars. As nonresistant Christians we cannot serve in any office which employs the use of force. Nor can we participate in military service, or in military training, or in the voluntary financial support of war. But we must aggressively, at the risk of life itself, do whatever we can for the alleviation of human distress and suffering.

Matthew 5:38-48; John 18:36; Romans 5:5; 12:18-21; I Corinthians 6:1-8; II Corinthians 10:3, 4; James 2:8; I Peter 2:23; 4:1.

ARTICLE 19. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE STATE

We believe that the state is ordained of God to maintain law and order. We seek to obey the New Testament commands to render honor to the authorities, to pay our taxes, to obey all laws which do not conflict with the higher law of God, and to pray for our rulers. The church should also witness to the authorities of God's redeeming love in Christ, and of His sovereignty over all men. In law enforcement the state does not and cannot operate on the nonresistant principles of Christ's kingdom. Therefore, nonresistant Christians cannot undertake any service in the state or in society which would violate the principles of love and holiness as taught by Christ and His inspired apostles.

Acts 4:19; 5:29; Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 1:20-22; 5:23; I Timothy 2:1, 2.

ARTICLE 20. THE FINAL CONSUMMATION

We believe that in addition to the physical order with which our senses are related, there also exists an eternal spiritual order, the realm of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of the angels, and of the church triumphant. We believe that at death the righteous enter at once into conscious joy and fellowship with Christ, while the wicked are in a state of conscious suffering. The church militant lives and witnesses in this present evil world, a world in which apostasy from God is to become even more pronounced. The church also looks forward with hope to the day of the Lord, to the personal return of Christ, and the glorious future of the kingdom of God. In His triumphant Second Coming Christ will judge Satan, and usher in the consummation of all things. His coming will introduce the resurrection, the transformation of the living saints, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of His glorious reign. He will deliver the kingdom to God the Father, cleanse the world by fire, create new heavens and a new earth, consign unbelievers to eternal punishment, and usher His children into the eternal bliss of the world to come.

Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:34, 41; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:22, 23; John 5:22; I Corinthians 15:24, 35-58; II Corinthians 5:1-4; Philippians 1:23; I Thessalonians 4:13-5:4; I Peter 1:4; II Peter 3:3-13; Revelation 15:3; 21:4; 22:3.

May God enable us all to attain His eternal kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world, that with His blessed Son we may enjoy fullness of life for ever and ever.

Brief Statement of Mennonite Doctrine

1963

This is a summary statement based on the Mennonite Confession of Faith adopted by Mennonite General Conference in 1963. For a fuller statement see the 1963 Confession of Faith.

1. We believe in one God eternally existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2. We believe that God has revealed Himself in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the inspired Word of God, and supremely in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. We believe that in the beginning God created all things by His Son. He made man in the divine image, with free will, moral character, and a spiritual nature.

4. We believe that man fell into sin, bringing depravity and death upon the race; that as sinner, man is self-centered and self-willed, unwilling and unable to break with sin.

5. We believe that there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who died to redeem us from sin and arose for our justification.

6. We believe that salvation is by grace through faith in Christ, a free gift bestowed by God on those who repent and believe.

7. We believe that the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, effects the new birth, gives guidance in life, empowers for service, and enables perseverance in faith and holiness.

8. We believe that the church is the body of Christ, the brotherhood of the redeemed, a disciplined people obedient to the Word of God, and a fellowship of love, intercession, and healing.

9. We believe that Christ commissioned the church to go into all the world, making disciples of all the nations, and ministering to every human need.

10. We believe it is the will of God that there should be ministers to teach the Word, to serve as leaders, to administer the ordinances, to lead the church in the exercise of discipline, and to serve as pastors and teachers.

11. We believe that those who repent and believe should be baptized with water as a symbol of baptism with the Spirit, cleansing from sin, and commitment to Christ.

12. We believe that the church should observe the communion of the Lord's Supper as a symbol of His broken body and shed blood, and of the fellowship of His church, until His return.

13. We believe in the washing of the saints' feet as a symbol of brotherhood, cleansing, and service, and in giving the right hand of fellowship and the holy kiss as symbols of Christian love.

14. We believe that God has established unique roles for man and woman, symbolized by man's bared head in praying and prophesying, and by woman's veiled head.

15. We believe that Christian marriage is intended by God to be the union of one man and one woman for life, and that Christians shall marry only in the Lord.

16. We believe that Christians are not to be conformed to the world, but should seek to conform to Christ in every area of life.

17. We believe that Christians are to be open and transparent in life, ever speaking the truth, and employing no oaths.

18. We believe that it is the will of God for Christians to refrain from force and violence in human relations and to show Christian love to all men.

19. We believe that the state is ordained of God to maintain order in society, and that Christians should honor rulers, be subject to authorities, witness to the state, and pray for governments.

20. We believe that at death the unsaved enter into everlasting punishment and the saved into conscious bliss with Christ, who is coming again, and will raise the dead, sit in judgment, and bring in God's everlasting kingdom.

Supporting Scriptures are cited following each article of the 1963 Mennonite Confession of Faith.

The Schleitheim Confession

MC 1527

Brotherly Union of a Number of Children of God Concerning Seven Articles

The Cover Letter

May joy, peace, mercy from our Father, through the atonement¹ of the blood of Christ Jesus, together with the gift of the Spirit—who is sent by the Father to all believers to [give] strength and consolation and constance in all tribulation until the end, Amen, be with all who love God and all children of light, who are scattered everywhere, wherever they might have been placed² by God our Father, wherever they might be gathered in unity of spirit in one God and Father of us all; grace and peace of heart be with you all. Amen.

Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord; first and primordially we are always concerned for your consolation and the assurance of your conscience (which was sometimes confused), so that you might not always be separated from us as aliens and by right almost completely excluded,³ but that you might turn to the true implanted members of Christ, who have been armed through patience and the knowledge of self, and thus be again united with us in the power of a godly Christian spirit and zeal for God.

It is manifest with what manifold cunning the devil has turned us aside, so that he might destroy and cast down the work of God, which in us mercifully and graciously has been partially begun. But the true Shepherd of our souls, Christ, who has begun such in us, will direct and teach⁴ the same unto the end, to His glory and our salvation, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters, we who have been assembled in the Lord at Schleithem on the Randen⁵ make known, in points and articles, unto all that love God, that as far as we are concerned, we have been united⁶ to stand fast in the Lord as obedient children of God, sons and daughters, who have been and shall be separated from the world in all that we do and leave undone, and (the praise and glory be to God alone) uncontradicted by all the brothers, completely at

peace.⁷ Herein we have sensed the unity of the Father and of our common Christ as present with us in their Spirit. For the Lord is a Lord of peace and not of quarreling, as Paul indicates.⁸ So that you understand at what points this occurred, you should observe and understand [what follows]:

A very great offense has been introduced by some false brothers among us,⁹ whereby several have turned away from the faith, thinking to practice and observe the freedom of the Spirit and of Christ. But such have fallen short of the truth and (to their own condemnation)¹⁰ are given over to the lasciviousness and license of the flesh. They have esteemed that faith and love may do and permit everything and that nothing can harm nor condemn them, since they are “believers.”

Note well, you members¹¹ of God in Christ Jesus, that faith in the heavenly Father through Jesus Christ is not thus formed; it produces and brings forth no such things as these false brothers and sisters practice and teach. Guard yourselves and be warned of such people, for they do not serve our Father, but their father, the devil.

But for you it is not so; for they who are Christ’s have crucified their flesh with all its lusts and desires.¹² You understand me¹³ well, and [know] the brothers whom we mean. Separate yourselves from them, for they are perverted. Pray the Lord that they may have knowledge unto repentance, and for us that we may have constance to persevere along the path we have entered upon, unto the glory of God and of Christ His Son. Amen.¹⁴

The Seven Articles

The articles we have dealt with, and in which we have been united,¹⁵ are these: baptism, ban, the breaking of bread, separation from abomination, shepherds in the congregation, the sword, the oath.

I. Notice concerning baptism. Baptism shall be given to all those who have been taught repentance and the amendment of life and [who] believe truly that their sins are taken away through Christ, and to all those who desire to walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and be buried with Him in death, so that they might rise with Him; to all those who with such an understanding themselves desire and request it from us; hereby is excluded all infant baptism, the greatest and first abomination of the pope. For this you have the reasons and the testimony of the writings and the practice of the apostles.¹⁶ We wish simply yet resolutely and with assurance to hold to the same.

II. We have been united as follows concerning the ban. The ban shall be employed with all those who have given themselves over to the Lord, to walk after [Him]¹⁷ in His commandments; those who have been baptized into the one body of Christ, and let themselves be called brothers or sisters, and still somehow slip and fall into error and sin, being inadvertently overtaken.¹⁸ The same [shall] be warned twice privately and the third time be publicly admonished before the entire congregation¹⁹ according to the command of Christ (Mt. 18).²⁰ But this shall be done according to the ordering of the Spirit of

God before the breaking of bread²¹ so that we may all in one spirit and in one love break and eat from one bread and drink from one cup.

III. Concerning the breaking of bread, we have become one and agree²² thus: all those who desire to break the one bread in remembrance of the broken body of Christ and all those who wish to drink of one drink in remembrance of the shed blood of Christ, they must beforehand be united²³ in the one body of Christ, that is the congregation of God, whose head is Christ, and that by baptism. For as Paul indicates,²⁴ we cannot be partakers at the same time of the table of the Lord and the table of devils. Nor can we at the same time partake and drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. That is: all those who have fellowship with the dead works of darkness have no part in the light. Thus all who follow the devil and the world, have no part with those who have been called out of the world unto God. All those who lie in evil have no part in the good.

So it shall and must be, that whoever does not share the calling of the one God to one faith, to one baptism, to one spirit, to one body together with all the children of God, may not be made one loaf together with them, as must be true if one wishes truly to break bread according to the command of Christ.²⁵

IV. We have been united concerning the separation that shall take place from the evil and the wickedness which the devil has planted in the world, simply in this; that we have no fellowship with them,²⁶ and do not run with them in the confusion of their abominations. So it is; since all who have not entered into the obedience of faith and have not united themselves with God so that they will to do His will, are a great abomination before God, therefore nothing else can or really will grow or spring forth from them than abominable things. Now there is nothing else in the world and all creation than good or evil, believing and unbelieving, darkness and light, the world and those who are [come] out of the world, God's temple and idols, Christ and Belial, and none will have part with the other.

To us, then, the commandment of the Lord is also obvious, whereby He orders us to be and to become separated from the evil one, and thus He will be our God and we shall be His sons and daughters.²⁷

Further, He admonishes us therefore to go out from Babylon and from the earthly Egypt, that we may not be partakers in their torment and suffering, which the Lord will bring upon them.²⁸

From all this we should learn that everything which has not been united²⁹ with our God in Christ is nothing but an abomination which we should shun.³⁰ By this are meant all popish and repopish³¹ works and idolatry,³² gatherings, church attendance,³³ winehouses, guarantees and commitments of unbelief,³⁴ and other things of the kind, which the world regards highly, and yet which are carnal or flatly counter to the command of God, after the pattern of all the iniquity which is in the world. From all this we shall be separated and have no part with such, for they are nothing but abominations, which cause us to be hated before our Christ Jesus, who has freed

us from the servitude of the flesh and fitted us for the service of God and the Spirit whom He has given us.

Thereby shall also³⁵ fall away from us the³⁶ diabolical weapons of violence—such as sword, armor, and the like, and all of their use to protect friends or against enemies—by virtue of the word of Christ: “you shall not resist evil.”³⁷

V. We have been united as follows concerning shepherds in the church of God. The shepherd in the church shall be a person according to the rule of Paul,³⁸ fully and completely, who has a good report of those who are outside the faith. The office of such a person shall be to read and exhort and teach, warn, admonish, or ban in the congregation, and properly to preside among the sisters and brothers in prayer, and in the breaking of bread,³⁹ and in all things to take care of the body of Christ, that it may be built up and developed, so that the name of God might be praised and honored through us, and the mouth of the mocker be stopped.

He shall be supported, wherein he has need, by the congregation which has chosen him, so that he who serves the gospel can also live therefrom, as the Lord has ordered.⁴⁰ But should a shepherd do something worthy of reprimand, nothing shall be done with him without the voice of two or three witnesses. If they sin they shall be publicly reprimanded, so that others might fear.⁴¹

But if the shepherd should be driven away or led to the Lord by the cross,⁴² at the same hour another shall be ordained⁴³ to his place, so that the little folk and the little flock of God may not be destroyed, but be preserved by warning and be consoled.

VI. We have been united as follows concerning the sword. The sword is an ordering of God outside the perfection of Christ. It punishes and kills the wicked, and guards and protects the good. In the law the sword is established⁴⁴ over the wicked for punishment and for death, and the secular rulers are established to wield the same.

But within the perfection of Christ only the ban is used for the admonition and exclusion of the one who has sinned, without the death of the flesh,⁴⁵ simply the warning and the command to sin no more.

Now many, who do not understand Christ's will for us, will ask: whether a Christian may or should use the sword against the wicked for the protection and defense of the good, or for the sake of love.

The answer is unanimously revealed: Christ teaches and commands us to learn from Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart and thus we shall find rest for our souls.⁴⁶ Now Christ says to the woman who was taken in adultery,⁴⁷ not that she should be stoned according to the law of His Father (and yet He says, “what the Father commanded me, that I do”)⁴⁸ but with mercy and forgiveness and the warning to sin no more, says: “Go, sin no more.” Exactly thus should we also proceed, according to the rule of the ban.

Second, is asked concerning the sword: whether a Christian shall pass sentence in disputes and strife about worldly matters, such as

the unbelievers have with one another. The answer: Christ did not wish to decide or pass judgment between brother and brother concerning inheritance, but refused to do so.⁴⁹ So should we also do.

Third, is asked concerning the sword: whether the Christian should be a magistrate if he is chosen thereto. This is answered thus: Christ was to be made king, but He fled and did not discern the ordinance of His Father.⁵⁰ Thus we should also do as He did and follow after Him, and we shall not walk in darkness. For He Himself says: "Whoever would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."⁵¹ He Himself further forbids the violence of the sword when He says: "the princes of this world lord it over them etc., but among you it shall not be so."⁵² Further Paul says, "Whom God has foreknown, the same he has also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son," etc.⁵³ Peter also says: "Christ has suffered (not ruled) and has left us an example, that you should follow after in his steps."⁵⁴

Lastly one can see in the following points that it does not befit a Christian to be a magistrate: the rule of the government is according to the flesh, that of the Christians according to the Spirit. Their houses and dwelling remain in this world, that of the Christians is in heaven. Their citizenship is in this world, that of the Christians is in heaven.⁵⁵ The weapons of their battle and warfare are carnal and only against the flesh, but the weapons of Christians are spiritual, against the fortification of the devil. The worldly are armed with steel and iron, but Christians are armed with the armor of God, with truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and with the Word of God. In sum: as Christ our Head is minded, so also must be minded the members of the body of Christ through Him, so that there be no division in the body, through which it would be destroyed.⁵⁶ Since then Christ is as is written of Him, so must His members also be the same, so that His body may remain whole and unified for its own advancement and upbuilding. For any kingdom which is divided within itself will be destroyed.⁵⁷

VII. We have been united as follows concerning the oath. The oath is a confirmation among those who are quarreling or making promises. In the law it is commanded that it should be done only in the name of God, truthfully and not falsely. Christ, who teaches the perfection of the law, forbids His [followers] all swearing, whether true nor false; neither by heaven nor by earth, neither by Jerusalem nor by our head; and that for the reason which He goes on to give: "For you cannot make one hair white or black." You see, thereby all swearing is forbidden. We cannot perform what is promised in swearing, for we are not able to change the smallest part of ourselves.⁵⁸

Now there are some who do not believe the simple commandment of God and who say, "But God swore by Himself to Abraham, because He was God (as He promised him that He would do good to him and would be his God if he kept His commandments). Why then should I not swear if

I promise something to someone?" The answer: hear what Scripture says: "God, since he wished to prove overabundantly to the heirs of His promise that His will did not change, inserted an oath so that by two immutable things we might have a stronger consolation (for it is impossible that God should lie)"⁵⁹ Notice the meaning of the passage: God has the power to do what He forbids you, for everything is possible to Him. God swore an oath to Abraham, Scripture says, in order to prove that His counsel is immutable. That means: no one can withstand and thwart His will; thus He can keep His oath. But we cannot, as Christ said above, hold or perform our oath, therefore we should not swear.

Others say that swearing cannot be forbidden by God in the New Testament when it was commanded in the Old, but that it is forbidden only to swear by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, and our head. Answer: hear the Scripture. He who swears by heaven, swears by God's throne and by Him who sits thereon.⁶⁰ Observe: swearing by heaven is forbidden, which is only God's throne; how much more is it forbidden to swear by God Himself. You blind fools, what is greater, the throne or He who sits upon it?

Others say, if it is then wrong to use God for truth, then the apostles Peter and Paul also swore.⁶¹ Answer: Peter and Paul only testify to that which God promised Abraham, whom we long after have received. But when one testifies, one testifies concerning that which is present, whether it be good or evil. Thus Simeon spoke of Christ to Mary and testified: "Behold: this one is ordained for the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign which will be spoken against."⁶²

Christ taught us similarly when He says:⁶³ Your speech shall be yea, yea; and nay, nay; for what is more than that comes of evil. He says, your speech or your word shall be yes and no, so that no one might understand that He had permitted it. Christ is simply yea and nay, and all those who seek Him simply will understand His Word. Amen.⁶⁴

The Cover Letter

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord; these are the articles which some brothers previously had understood wrongly and in a way not conformed to the true meaning. Thereby many weak consciences were confused, whereby the name of God has been grossly slandered, for which reason it was needful that we should be brought to agreement⁶⁵ in the Lord, which has come to pass. To God be praise and glory!

Now that you have abundantly understood the will of God as revealed through us at this time, you must fulfill this will, now known, persistently and unswervingly. For you know well what is the reward of the servant who knowingly sins.

Everything which you have done unknowingly and now confess to have done wrongly, is forgiven you, through that believing prayer, which is offered among us in our meeting for all our shortcomings and guilt, through the gracious forgiveness of God and through the blood of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Watch out for all who do not walk in simplicity of divine truth, which has been stated by us in this letter in our meeting, so that everyone might be governed among us by the rule of the ban, and that henceforth the entry of false brothers and sisters among us might be prevented.

Put away from you that which is evil, and the Lord will be your God, and you will be His sons and daughters.⁶⁶

Dear brothers, keep in mind what Paul admonished Titus.⁶⁷ He says: "The saving grace of God has appeared to all, and disciplines us, that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live circumspect righteous and godly lives in this world; awaiting the same hope and the appearing of the glory of the great God and of our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all unrighteousness and to purify unto himself a people of his own, that would be zealous of good works." Think on this, and exercise yourselves therein, and the Lord of peace will be with you.

May the name of God be forever blessed and greatly praised, Amen. May the Lord give you His peace, Amen.

Done at Schleithem, St. Matthew's Day,⁶⁸
Anno MDXXVII.

Notes

1. A most significant concept in the thought of Michael Sattler is that of *Verreinigung*, which, according to the context, must be translated in many different ways. In the title we render it "Union"; here in the salutation it can most naturally be translated "reconciliation" or "atonement"; later in the text, in the passive participle form, it will mean "to be brought to unity." Thus the same word can be used for the reconciling work of Jesus Christ, for the procedure whereby brothers come to a common mind, for the state of agreement in which they find themselves, and for the document which states the agreement to which they have come. Fast suggests that here, in connection with "the blood of Christ," the meaning might be "fellowship"; cf: 1 Corinthians 10:16.

2. Or, literally, "ordered"; the rendering of J. C. Wenger, "scattered everywhere as it has been ordained of God our Father," is a good paraphrase if "ordained" may be understood without sacramental or predestinarian connotations.

3. This term "aliens" or "foreigners" was interpreted by Cramer *BRN*, 605, note 1, in the geographic or political sense, as referring to non-Swiss. Kiwiet, *Pilgram Marpeck*, Kassel, 1957, p. 44, takes for granted the same meaning and says more sharply that at Schleithem the Swiss Anabaptists broke communion with the German ones. This understanding is impossible for several reasons:

There was no such strong sense of national identity, divided on clear geographic lines, in the 1520s;

Sattler and Reublin, leaders in the meeting, were not Swiss;

The libertines whom Schleithem had in mind, although Denck (or Bucer) might have been included, were (if Anabaptist) surely mostly Swiss; namely, the enthusiasts of St. Gall (H. Fast "Die Sonderstellung der Täufer in St. Gallen und Appenzell," *Zwingliana* XI, 1960, pp. 223 ff.), and Ludwig Hätzer.

This term has a quite different reference; it is an allusion to Ephesians 2:12 and 19, testifying to the reconciling effect of the gospel on men who previously had been alienated by unbelief.

4. "Direct" and "teach" have as their object "the same," i.e., the "work of God partially begun in us." Wenger's paraphrase, "direct the same and teach [us]" is smoother but weakens the striking image of a "work of God" within man which can be "partially begun," "cast down," "directed," and "taught." There is, however, ground for Böhmer's conjecture that the original may have read *keren* (guide) rather than *leren* (teach).

5. The "Langer Randen" and the "hoher Randen" are hills overlooking Schleithem and not, as a modern reader might think, a reference to the fact that Schleithem is near the (contemporary, political) border.

The original reads "Schlaten am Randen." A good half-dozen villages in southern Germany bear the names Schlat, Schlatt, or Schlatten. One, near Engen in Baden, also is identified as "am Randen," and until recently was held by some to have been the place of origin of the *Seven Articles*. The evidence, now generally accepted, for Schleithem near Schaffhausen, is easily surveyed:

J. J. Rüger, a Schaffhausen chronicler, writing around 1594, identifies Schleithem with the *Seven Articles*;

In the local dialect, the equivalent of *et* in modern German is long *a* as in Schlaten, whereas the other villages Schlatten or Schlat have a short *a*;

Being subject to overlapping jurisdictions and therefore hard to police, the Klettgau, and Schleithem on its edge, were relatively safe and accessible for Anabaptists and thus a most fitting meeting place linking the major centers in southwest Germany and northeast Switzerland. This was the first area where Sattler's colleague W. Reublin had been active after his expulsion from Zürich early in 1525. This juri-

dical situation continued through the century; Anabaptism was still alive in the Kühltal above Schleithem as late as Rüger's writing.

Professor F. Blanke reviews the question of place in Z, VI, pp. 104 f.; cf. also Werner Pletscher, "Wo Entstand das Bekenntnis von 1527?" *MGB*, V, 1940, pp. 20 f.

6. According to Böhmer, one line of print was misplaced in imprint A. The text seems to say literally, "we were assembled in points and articles." The verb here is again "*vereinigt*." The "points and articles" may well have stood elsewhere in the sentence in the original text: "we have been united in points and articles" or "to stand fast in the Lord in these points and articles." Wenger's translation, "we are of one mind to abide in the Lord" is the best paraphrase but sacrifices the passive verbal construction which is important to the writer.

7. Beginning with the parenthesis "(the praise and glory be to God alone)," the closing phrases of this paragraph refer not simply to a common determination to be faithful to the Lord, but much more specifically to the actual Schleithem experience and the sense of unity (*Vereinigung*) which the members had come to in the course of the meeting. "Without contradiction of all the brothers" is the formal description and "completely at peace" is the subjective definition of this sense of Holy Spirit guidance. Zwingli considered the very report that "we have come together" to be the proof of the culpable, sectarian, conspiratorial character of Anabaptism (*Elenchus*, Z, VI, p. 56).

8. First Corinthians 14:33.

9. Ds. H. W. Meihuizen has recently asked with great thoroughness "Who were the 'False Brethren' mentioned in the Schleithem Articles?" (*MQR*, XLI, 1967, pp. 200 ff.). Meihuizen's method is to survey the entire Reformation scene, Anabaptists of all shadings as well as Reformers, especially those at Strasbourg whom Sattler had recently left. Comparing the known theological positions of these men with the Schleithem statements, Meihuizen concludes that Schleithem must have been aimed against Denck, Hubmaier, Hut, Hätzer, Bucer, and Capito. One can agree with this description of the positions in question, without being convinced that the meeting was this clearly directed against a few particular men who were specifically not invited. If any one person was meant, it would most likely be Hätzer, whom Sattler had just been with in Strasbourg, and who was the only one of these who could be accused of libertinistic leanings. For present purposes, i.e., in order to understand the meaning of this document, it suffices to be clear from the internal evidence (in agreement with Meihuizen):

That some persons previously attached to some of the positions condemned were present at Schleithem in order to be participants in the event of "being brought to unity"; the "false brothers" referred to by the cover letter were therefore not only state-church Reformers but at least some of them were within Anabaptism:

That the greatest emphasis in the *Seven Articles* themselves falls on those points of ultimate theological separateness from the Reformed: baptism, relation between ban and the supper, sword, oath. Here the list is so parallel to the document from Strasbourg that one surmises that Sattler may have been developing his outline already when he was at Strasbourg;

That in the juxtaposition of the cover letter and the *Seven Articles*, Sattler affirms an inner linkage between the positions of the marginal Anabaptists and Spiritualists who differed from the Zürich-Schleithem stream, and those of the evangelical Reformers.

10. H. W. Meihuizen reads the phrase "to their own condemnation" as meaning that the Schleithem assembly took action to excommunicate the libertines whom the text here refers to. "The Concept of Restitution in the Anabaptism of Northwestern Europe," *MQR*, Vol. XLIV, April 1970, p. 149. This is not possible. The verb *ergeben* refers to the libertines' abandoning themselves to lasciviousness, not to the Anabaptists' action. In order to enable this interpretation Meihuizen must omit the parentheses which are in the original.

11. "Glieder" (members) has in German only the meaning related to the image of the body; the overtone of "membership" in a *group*, which makes the phrase "members of God" unusual in modern English, is not present in the original.

12. Galatians 5:24.

13. The use of the first person singular here is the demonstration that the introductory letter was written, probably after the meeting, by an individual.

14. This is the conclusion of the introductory letter and of the epistolary style. The "cover letter" is not in the Bern manuscript, and the *Seven Articles* probably circulated most often without it.

15. With one exception, every article begins with the same use of the word *vereinigt* as a passive participle, which we have rendered thus literally as a reminder of the meaning of *Vereinigung* for Sattler.

16. Here the printed version identifies the following Scripture texts (giving chapter number only): Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:6; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36; Acts 16:31-33; 19:4.

17. *Nachwandeln*, to walk after, is the nearest approximation in the Schleithem text to the concept of discipleship (*Nachfolge*) which was later to become especially current among Anabaptists.

18. Two interpretations of this phrase are possible. "To be inadvertently overtaken" might be a description of falling into sin, parallel to the earlier phrase "somehow slip and fall." This would mean that sin is for the Christian disciple partly a matter of ignorance or inattention. Cramer, *BRN*, p. 607, note 2, and Jenny, p. 55, seek to explain that all sin is somehow inadvertent; i.e., that at the time of a sinful decision one is deceived and not fully aware of its gravity. Calvin (with some grounds in the phrasing of the French translation) misunderstood this text to mean that the Anabaptists would distinguish between forgivable and unforgivable sins, with only the inadvertent ones being within the scope of the congregation's reconciling concern. Or the reference may be to the way the guilty person was discovered.

19. The printed version inserts "or banned."

20. This reference to Matthew 18 is the only Scripture reference in the earliest handwritten text. "Rule of Christ" or "Command of Christ" is a standard designation for this text. Cf. J. Yoder: "Binding and Loosing," *Concern* 14, Scottdale, 1967, esp. pp. 15 ff. Other Scripture allusions identified in the footnotes are not labeled in the text. This abundant citation of scriptural language without being concerned to indicate the source of quotation is an indication of the fluency with which Anabaptists thought in biblical vocabulary; it is probably also an indication that they thought of those texts as expressing a meaningful truth rather than as "proof texts."

21. At this point Walter Köhler, the editor of the printed version, suggests the text Matthew 5:23. If "the ordering of the spirit" relates specifically to "before the breaking of bread" and means to point to a Scripture text, this could be a likely one; or 1 Corinthians 11 could also possibly be alluded to; but "ordering of the spirit" is not the usual way in which the Anabaptists refer to a Bible quotation. The phrase can also mean a call for a personal and flexible attitude, guided by the Holy Spirit, in the application of the concern for reconciliation.

22. This is the one point at which the word *vereinigt* is not used at the beginning of an article, presumably because it occurs later in the same sentence.

23. *Vereinigt*: here the word has none of the meanings detailed above, but points to still another; to the work of God in constituting the unity of the Christian church.

24. First Corinthians 10:21. Some texts have here "Saint Paul."

25. Most ecumenical debate about the validity of sacraments focuses upon either the sacramental status of the officiant or the doctrinal understanding of the meaning of the emblems. It should be pointed out that the Anabaptist understanding of close communion refers not to the sacrament but to the participants. It is invalidated not by an unauthorized officiant or an insufficient concept of sacrament, but by the absence of real community among those present.

26. Note the shift from "world" to "they." "The world" is not discussed independently of the people constituting the unregenerate order.

27. Second Corinthians 6:17.

28. Revelation 18:4 ff. Some texts read "which the Lord intends to bring upon them."

29. *Vereinigt*.

30. The printed version adds "and flee."

31. The prefix *wider* can mean either "counter" or "re-"

(modern *wieder-*). Both meanings of course apply to the Reformation churches of Strasbourg and the Swiss cities, which are meant here; they are both anti-popish (having broken with the Roman communion) and re-popish (having retained or reinstated certain characteristics of Catholicism). Earlier translations have chosen the rendering "papist and anti-papist," but the other reading carries a greater pointedness of meaning and is supported by Zwingli's translation. Thus the claim that the new Protestant churches are at some points copies of what was wrong with Catholicism is already taken for granted in early 1527.

32. *Götzendienst*. The Bern manuscript and the early prints read *Gottesdienst* ("worship"); but Zwingli, who had other manuscripts as well, translated "idolatry." Since the next two words both deal with church attendance, "idolatry" is less redundant. "Idolatry" was a current designation in the whole Zwinglian movement for the place of statues and pictures in Catholic worship.

33. *Kilchgang*, literally meaning church attendance, has no congregational dimension to it but refers to the conformity to established patterns of those who, while perhaps sympathizing with the Anabaptists, still avoided any public reproach by regularly being seen at the state church functions.

34. The Bern manuscript reads *Burgschaft*, i.e., a guarantee or security supporting a promise, and belongs in the economic and social realm. If "unbelief" here refers to a lack of sincerity, then the "guarantees and commitments of unbelief" would mean such matters as signing notes and mortgages and affidavits in less than good faith. Martin Luther held strongly that such guarantees, even in good faith, were not only unwise but immoral since the guarantor puts himself in the place of God. ("On Trading and Usury, 1524," in *Works of Martin Luther*, Muhlenburg, Philadelphia, 1931, Vol. IV, pp. 9 ff). His argument is thus very parallel to that of the Anabaptists on the oath. A more likely view is that "unbelief" is synonymous with "worldly," and the reference is rather to guilds and social clubs. Zwingli translates with *foedera*, "covenants." Bullinger bears out this interpretation by reprimanding the Anabaptists at length (*Von dem unverschampten Fräfel*. . . , pp. cxi to cxviii) for their opposition to associations and societies (*pündtnussen und gselschafften*), concord and friendship (*vertrag unnd fründtschafft*) with unbelievers, and seemingly temporal joy (*zymliche zytliche fröud*). The later printed text changed *Burgshaft* to *Bürgerschaft* (citizenship), which is less in place in Art. IV. In April 1527 Zwingli was unsure what it meant but leaned toward "serving as a guarantor" (Z, IX, p. 112); by August when he wrote the *Elenchus* he interpreted it as "citizenship," perhaps as referring to the Anabaptists' refusal to perform the citizen's oath. But if *Bürgerschaft* should mean citizenship, the "commitments of unbelief" still must mean some kind of involvement, legal, economic, or social, with unbelievers (Z, VI, p. 121). Luke 16:15's reference to "abominations" may be alluded to.

35. The printed version adds "doubtless."

36. The printed version reads "unchristian and."

37. Matthew 5:39.

38. First Timothy 3:7. Interpreters are not clear where the focus of Art. V lies. Its first thrust is a call for the shepherd to be a morally worthy person, i.e., a critique of the practice of his being appointed on the grounds of his education or social connections without regard to moral stature. Zwingli's translation moves the accent by translating "the shepherd should be one from the congregation," i.e., not someone from elsewhere. As Zwingli knew, the Anabaptists also rejected the naming of a minister to a parish by a distant city council, and he let that knowledge influence his translation.

39. The printed version adds, "to lead the brothers and sisters in prayer, to begin to break bread. . . ."

40. First Corinthians 9:14.

41. The change in number here from "a shepherd" to "if they sin" is explained by the fact that this sentence is a quotation from 1 Timothy 5:20.

42. "Cross" is already by this time a very clear cliché or "technical term" designating martyrdom.

43. Perhaps "installed" would be less open to the sacramental misunderstanding. *Verordnet* has no sacramental meaning.

44. "Law" here is a specific reference to the Old Testament. Significantly the verb here is not *verordnet* but merely *geordnet*; conveying even less of a sense of

permanence or of specific divine institution. It should be noted that in this entire discussion "sword" refers to the judicial and police powers of the state; there is no reference to war in Art. VI; there had been a brief one in IV.

45. "Without the death of the flesh" is the clear reading of the earliest manuscript. Zwingli, however, understood it "toward the putting to death of the flesh," a possible allusion to 1 Corinthians 5; the difference in the original is only between *a* and *o*.

46. Matthew 11:29.

47. John 8:11.

48. John 8:22.

49. Luke 12:13.

50. Two interpretations are possible for "did not discern the ordering of His Father." This may mean that Jesus did not respect, as being an obligation for Him, the service in the state in the office of king, even though the existence of the state is a divine ordinance. More likely would be the interpretation that Jesus did not evaluate the action of the people wanting to make Him king as having been brought about (ordered) by His Father.

51. Matthew 16:24.

52. Matthew 20:25.

53. Romans 8:30.

54. First Peter 2:21.

55. Philippians 3:20.

56. Here the printed version adds Matthew 12:25: "For every kingdom divided against itself will be destroyed."

57. Matthew 12:25.

58. Matthew 5:34-37.

59. Hebrews 6:7 ff.

60. Matthew 5:35.

61. Zwingli's translation fills in the argument here: "if it is bad to swear, or even to use the Lord's name to confirm the truth, then the apostles Peter and Paul sinned: for they swore."

62. Luke 2:34.

63. The difference in tense between "taught" and "says" is in the original; it results from the fact that Scripture references are always given in the present: "Christ says," "Paul says," "Peter says."

64. This concludes the *Seven Articles*.

65. *Vereinigt*.

66. A second reference to 2 Corinthians 6:17.

67. Titus 2:11-14.

68. February 24.

THE RIS/GC
CONFESSIOAL TRADITION

Mennonite Articles of Faith

GC Ris 1766/1895

I. Of the Knowledge of God from Nature.

We believe that there necessarily must be and actually is a supremely perfect Being, exalted above all other beings; a Being possessing in Himself infinite wisdom, power and glory, by whom all things were made and are continually sustained and governed;—this we believe not only because of the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, but because we may also clearly gather it from the things created.

Leaving our own being out of consideration, we see the heavens (Psa. 19:1; 8:3), the earth (Psa. 24:1; Job 26:7), the seas (Psa. 89:9; Jer. 5:22) and all that in them is (Job 12:7-9; Psa. 107:23, 24; Psa. 104) proclaim that such a greatness (Psa. 104:24) and glory (Psa. 8:9; 19:5; 104:1-3), skill and mastery (Psa. 104; 139:1-18), fixed order (Psa. 148:6; Isa. 40:26; Jer. 31:35, 36), innumerable benefits (Acts 14:17; Psa. 119:64) and much besides, must of necessity have an author who Himself is infinitely great, glorious, wise, powerful and good, just as the perfectness of a work of art gives evidence of the ability and insight of the artist.

Considering ourselves also, we find that this is no less verified when we thoughtfully observe the ingenious mechanism of our body (Job 10:11, 12), the marvelous qualities and capabilities of the soul, as well as the union and reciprocal relation of both, all of which points to a supreme author or creator and teaches us our exalted duties toward the same. Mal. 1:6; Acts 17:27. In this we are also especially confirmed by the consciousness of peace or fear, accordingly as we obey or disobey the voice of the law as it is written in our hearts. Rom. 2:15.

All this, together with the concurring testimony of all thinking people in all ages, leads us to the conclusion that the thought that all things are eternal and self-existent or have been brought into existence by chance, and work independent of the control of a higher being, is so irrational that only presumptuous fools (Psa. 14:1; Isa. 29:15, 16) or the stubbornly hardened (Jer. 5:1-5) can entertain it, and that they do violence to their better convictions in order that, continuing in such unbelief, they may sin the more unhindered.

II. Of the Holy Scriptures.

Although, as has been said, we conceive from the things that are created that there must be a God who in His own being possesses infinite perfections, nevertheless, without a further revelation concerning the nature of His being, His perfection, His ways and His works, His holy will, and (since we have sinned) especially concerning the way and means of being reconciled with God, we would be much in the dark, as has been generally true of all the heathen.

Therefore we conceive it an incalculable boon that God has spoken at sundry times and in divers manners in times past to the fathers and prophets and in the fulness of time through His only begotten Son, as also through His holy apostles (Heb. 1:1, 2), and that in His gracious pleasure He has had as much of it recorded as is necessary for us as a rule of faith and conduct. Rom. 15:4; II Tim. 3:15-17.

Under the term Holy Scriptures we include all those books known as regular or canonical, from the Pentateuch to Revelation. These Scriptures we call holy, because they are inspired by God and written by holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. II Pet. 1:21. We accept them, therefore, not as the word of man, but of God; as the only infallible and sufficient rule of faith and conduct to which we owe supreme reverence and obedience.

There are many and weighty arguments upon which this our faith rests. Of these we give the following: (a) The teaching contained in these holy books transcends the laws or the light of nature, but in no wise contradicts them. (b) The contents thereof are altogether worthy of God and invite reverence for Him. (c) All that is contained therein serves to the attainment of holy ends; as the glory of God, the good of one's neighbor, and one's own happiness. (d) The holy writers were persons of distinguished piety and uprightness, who neither evidenced credulity nor sought their own glory, justification or temporal advantage in this work, much less could they obtain such; but their sole object was the glory of God and the salvation and peace of their fellowmen. (e) By means of supernatural miracles, fulfillment of prophecies, and many other things, God convinced them, and us through them, of their divine mission. Moreover, everyone who yields himself in honest obedience and submission to the Word of God, finds peace of heart and obtains for himself the assurance of the truth.

III. Of God's Being and Perfections.

In accordance with these Holy Scriptures and as taught by them we believe there is an only God (Deut. 6:4; I Cor. 8:4-6), a Being wholly perfect (Matt. 5:48), a Spirit (John 4:24), self-existent (Psa. 90:2), unchangeable (Jas. 1:17; Psa. 102:28), omnipresent (Jer. 23:23, 24; Psa. 139:7-10), all-sufficient (Acts 17:25), and altogether perfect in His attributes, viz., holy (I Pet. 1:16; Lev. 11:44), righteous (Psa. 11:7), omnipotent (Gen. 17:1), omniscient (Psa. 139:1-18) all-wise (Isa. 40:28; Psa. 104:24), merciful (Jas. 5:11), gracious, long-suffering, of great goodness and truth (Ex. 34:6; Psa. 145:8, in a word, God is love (I John 4:16), the source of life (Psa. 36:16; Jer. 2:13), and author of all good (Jas. 1:17; Psa. 102:28), the creator and preserver of all things, visible and invisible (Col. 1:16, 17), worthy to be revered, loved and glorified by all His creatures.

IV. Of the Holy Trinity.

This one God (Deut. 6:4) is more definitely revealed in Holy Scripture (John 1:18) and distinguished as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 17; Isa. 48:16; Matt. 3:16, 17; I Cor. 12:4-6), yet with the added declaration that these three are one.

The Father is presented to us as the author (John 5:26; 17:5, 6) and source of all things (I Cor. 8:6), of whom, in an inscrutable manner, the Son is begotten (Psa. 2:7-8) from eternity (John 1:1, 2), before all creatures. Col. 1:15, 16.

The Son is the Father's eternal word and wisdom (John 1:1; I Cor. 1:24; Col. 2:3), through whom all things are (Col. 1:15, 16), the effulgence of the Father's glory and the very image of his being. Heb. 1:2, 3.

The Holy Spirit belongs, as a divine entity, to the essence of God. He is as well the Spirit of the Father (Matt. 10:20) as of the Son (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:9), and

proceeds from the Father and from the Son (John 15:26) as the mighty worker of all divine and spiritual things. Phil. 1:19.

We profess that these three are not divided or separated from one another, but united and one (John 10:30) in essence as well as in will and operation, since the same names, attributes and works are predicated of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, so, too, the same divine regard, as the Saviour so explicitly commands to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19), and as also every believer has need of the grace, love and communion of these three (II Cor. 13:14), for which reasons equal honor and equal service are due them (see of the Son Luke 24:52; John 5:23; 14:23, 24; Phil. 2:10, 11; Rev. 5:12. Of the Holy Spirit Eph. 4:30; I Cor. 3:16).

V. Of the Creation and All Things and of Man in Particular.

We believe that this eternal God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the omnipotent Creator of heaven and earth, who in the beginning (Gen. 1:1), in six days (Ex. 20:11), made the heavens with all their host (Neh. 9:6), the stars, the holy angels and celestial spirits, as also the earth and the seas with all that is found in and on the same, and lastly, on the sixth day, man who is the masterpiece of all God's works upon earth. Gen. 1:26, 27. Man's body is indeed made of the earth (Gen. 2:7, 3:19), but his spirit is by the breath, or a direct powerful working, of the Almighty (Job 33:4) and is therefore immaterial and immortal. Matt. 10:28.

Man being thus, especially after the spirit, of such exalted and divine origin (Acts 17:28) he is created likewise unto a noble end, viz., to know God, to love Him, and to glorify Him (Rom. 1:19-21), which is the essence of all true godliness. John 17:3; Jer. 9:23, 24.

Further, God gave Adam a wife for his help (Gen. 2:18), built of one of his ribs (Gen. 2:22) that there should be between them the closest union and the most intimate love. Gen. 2:23, 24. Out of her all mankind have sprung. Acts 17:26.

VI. Of God as Preserver and Ruler.

We believe that God in His supreme wisdom, power, righteousness and goodness, provides for (Acts 17:25; Psa. 145:15), directs (Job 37:1-13; Gen. 50:20), and governs (Psa. 103:19; Psa. 104; Psa. 147) all things that He has made, so that nothing takes place (Lam. 3:37), however insignificant it may seem, without this divine providence and control; as Jesus also plainly taught that no sparrow falls to the earth without the will of our heavenly Father. Luke 12:6, 7; Matt. 10:29. Yet we must here carefully distinguish between what God works directly (Jas. 1:16, 17; II Cor. 3:5; Phil. 2:13) and what He permits and overrules (Gen. 31:7; Isa. 10:5-15) according to the nature of things and in consonance with His divine perfection. (It is of the highest importance to note this distinction, wherefore James says, "Do not err." God does not bring about the evil of sin, but permits, yet limits and overrules it). Above all do we believe in God's control, protection and direction exercised with solicitous care (Zech. 2:8) and in minute detail (Matt. 10:30; I Tim. 4:10) over them that fear Him (Psa. 33:18; 34:7, 9, 10, 15, 17), love Him (Rom. 8:28), and obey Him. John 15:10.

VII. Of the Condition of Man Before the Fall.

Concerning the condition of man before the fall, we believe that God made man upright (Eccl. 7:29) and good (Gen. 1:31), in His image and after His likeness (Gen. 1:26; 5:1); in which holy and good condition our first parents were glorious and happy creatures, endowed and adorned with exalted wisdom, pure affections and impulses, and with a free will whereby they could (under God's permission) accept without compulsion, or of their own accord reject, what was presented to them, whether it be the counsel and will of God (Gen. 2:16, 17) or the counsel and will of the evil one (Gen. 3:4, 5) as the issue demonstrated. To prove this, God laid upon them a certain duty (namely, first of all the law of nature written in their hearts (Rom. 2:14, 15); wherefore God could ask Cain, Gen. 4:7: "Is it not thus?"—Luther's translation), and made, as it were, a covenant with them. Hos. 6:7.

As long as this good condition lasted, they doubtless enjoyed a perfect and intimate converse with God. (Gen. 3:8) in child-like love and reverence, which, had they continued therein, could have issued only in a pure blessedness for soul and body in all eternity.

VIII. Of the Fall of Man and Its Consequences.

We believe that our first parents, Adam and Eve, remained not in this blessed condition, but allowed themselves to be led astray through the crafty deceit of the serpent, the devil, or Satan (Gen. 3:1-5; Rev. 20:2; John 8:44) who with his angels had before fallen away from God and been cast out. Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4. Our parents fell in that they, against their conscience, transgressed the plain command of God and ate of the tree (Gen. 3:1-8) of which God had bidden them not to eat under pain of death. Gen. 2:16, 17.

Through this one disobedience sin with all its sad consequences came into the world. We acknowledge the far-reaching effects of this in every relation, first of all, however, for our first parents. Rom. 5:12-21. Through it they fell from their innocence and were filled with shame; in the place of their filial reverence and openheartedness came fear and pangs of conscience (Gen. 3:1-8); in place of the unrestricted and intimate converse with God, a condition of antipathy and estrangement from Him (John 3:20), yea, the wrath and severity of the holy and righteous Creator. Eph. 2:3. Besides the peace with God they lost also the peace with their created surroundings, they must pass under the sentence of death (Rom. 5), were driven from the garden of Eden, the way to the tree of life was closed for them (Gen. 3:24), the earth itself was cursed on their account, and they were doomed to much pain and hard work. Gen. 3:16-19.

All this misery and wretchedness passed as a natural heritage upon all their posterity (I Cor. 15:21, 22), for how could they bring forth seed different from themselves (Job. 14:4; John 3:6), or how could they transmit prerogatives which they themselves had lost? Therefore we believe that they and all their posterity in, through, and with them, have become subject to physical (Rom. 5:14; I Cor. 15:21, 22), spiritual (Eph. 4:18; Jas. 1:15; Rom. 7:13), and eternal death (Rom. 6:23), and utterly unable to be saved therefrom either by their own efforts (Rom. 3:23; Jer. 13:23) or through any creature. Psa. 49:7, 8. In this miserable condition they would, therefore, have to remain forever, if God had not come to them in His mercy. Ezek. 16:5, 6.

IX. Of the Election of Grace or Election and Rejection.

We believe that God from eternity foresaw and knew all things that have been, that are, and that yet shall be, both good and evil (Acts 15:18; Isa. 41:21-26; Heb. 4:13), therefore also the above named sad fall of man with its fatal consequences, which is clearly indicated by the foreordaining of Christ as mediator (Eph. 1:4; I Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8); nevertheless, that He in no wise caused the fall or made it necessary (James 1:13; Psa. 145:17) but only permitted it for reasons known only to His infinite wisdom. Rom. 11:33. Since He is the eternal, highest good (Matt. 19:17) and the fountain-head of all life (Psa. 36:9), we understand and confess that He is the author, source, and doer only of those things that are good and pure and holy, and in harmony with His nature (Jas. 1:16, 17), but in no wise of sin or impurity, which are damnable. Everywhere He commands (I Pet. 1:15, 16; Eph. 5:1) and desires the good, commends it (II Cor. 5:20) and incites to it by means of great promises (Deut. 28:1, 2; Matt. 5:1-12; II Cor. 7:1). On the other hand He prohibits the evil (Rom. 12:9), warns against it (Gen. 4:6, 7), threatens the evil-doers (Deut. 28:15), punishes them often in this life (I Sam. 15:23; Psa. 73:16-19), and finally pronounces upon them an eternal punishment. Matt. 25:46; 3:12. He thus declares Himself the enemy of sin, and that all unrighteousness is offensive to His nature. Psa. 45:8. As it is, therefore, impossible that God should lie (Num. 23:19; Tit. 1:2), so it is also impossible that He should work in a manner contrary to His perfectly holy nature. Gen. 18:25; Job. 8:3; II Tim. 2:13.

We, therefore, cannot and must not believe that God should in His free pleasure have decreed to leave by far the greater part of fallen humanity in their sins withholding from them altogether the needed grace for conversion and salvation, much less that He should have created them to the end that they should be damned (I John 4:8), and that thus He willed and made necessary their impenitence and hardness of heart in order to bring them into perdition (Psa. 51:6); for as the Lord liveth He hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked but in that he turn from his way and live. Ezek. 33:11; II Pet. 3:9; I Tim. 2:4.

We do indeed gladly and heartily believe that God in and of Himself formed an eternal purpose (Eph. 3:11; 1:9; Rom. 8:28) concerning all that which He would in time perform (Eph. 1:11) especially how and by what means He would redeem fallen man (Acts 4:28); likewise, that He decreed to impart His love, His grace, and His gifts in larger measure to some, in smaller measure to others (Luke 8:10; Matt. 25:15; Rom. 9:13), and this according to His own will and pleasure (Matt. 20:15; II Tim. 2:20), as experience proves;—but that nevertheless His loving kindness is so great, so far-reaching, and so all-inclusive (II Cor. 5:19; John 3:16; 1:7; I John 2:2) that no one is excluded therefrom without a just cause. Psa. 145:9; Acts 17:30; Tit. 2:11, 12. This He confirmed by His command that the gospel of this universal grace, love, and good-will shall be proclaimed and offered to every creature. Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:47.

Moreover, we confess that in the wisdom and the ways of God, especially in this matter, there are depths which will ever be beyond our ability to fathom in this life. Therefore we deem it best not to seek to penetrate further into the mysteries of the divine purposes, but in our confession to rest satisfied with a statement of the

nature of those persons respectively whom God has decreed to save or to condemn.

Everyone, namely, who with a penitent and believing heart (Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21) apprehends, accepts and abides in the proffered salvation (John 1:12, 13; Acts 2:41; Rev. 3:20; Matt. 24:13; I John 2:19; Rev. 2:10) him has God before the foundation of the world, out of free grace, and for Christ's sake, elected (II Thess. 2:13; Jas. 2:5; I Pet. 2:9) and ordained (Eph. 1:5) to make him partaker of His kingdom and His glory (Matt. 25:34, 41); him has God foreknown (I Pet. 1:1, 2) and called by his name. II Tim. 2:19; Rev. 3:5.

On the other hand, they that despise and reject the proffered grace (Rom. 2:4, 5; Heb. 10:29), love darkness rather than light (John 3:19), and continue in sin and unbelief (John 3:18)—these He has ordained to eternal destruction from His face (II Thess. 1:9) by reason of their own willful wickedness (Matt. 23:37; Prov. 1:24-32) as those that thrust from them the Word and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life. Acts 13:46. Seeing they despise the Lord's supper to which they were invited, they shall never taste of it. Luke 14:24

X. Of Man's Restoration.

Since God purposed even from the foundation of the world to redeem fallen man through His Son, Jesus Christ, as above set forth, He in His goodness did not leave him long in his hopeless condition, but revealed unto him, immediately after the fall, His purpose of grace by the promise of a redeemer, who as the seed of the woman should crush the serpent's head, although it should bruise His heel. (This promise, mysterious as it may seem, is the basis of all succeeding promises. Gen. 3:15).

This, together with many other evidences of God's goodness, gave our first parents such a great consolation that they could perceive how that by faith in God's promises, in a sincere conversion to Him, grace and salvation could be obtained. Heb. 11:4. (It seems that Eve already at the birth of Cain drew comfort from this hope. Gen. 4:1). Thus, through the inestimable grace of God in Christ, revealed to them as above stated, there was given to them, in distinction from the fallen angels, the possibility and hope of being restored to blessedness, and with them to all their posterity in so far as these would not cut themselves off by their own guilt and the rejection of God's grace.

This revelation of His grace in and through the promise of a redeemer, was renewed and confirmed both to the devout patriarchs (Gen. 12:2, 3) and through all the prophets (Luke 1:70; 24:27) as also by means of many symbols and types (Heb. 9:8-10), in order that they should exercise faith in this coming Messiah (I Pet. 1:10, 11), wait with confidence for their redemption through Him (Rom. 4:20), and look forward to the same with desire (Luke 10:24) as many among them did in a remarkable manner. John 8:56.

XI. Of Man's Freedom and Ability After the Fall.

Regarding man's free agency, we believe, that however great may be the loss and the ruin that have come upon mankind through the fall in sin (as set forth in Art. IX), yet through God's grace the light of reason and of conscience has not been wholly quenched, as we are taught by Holy Scripture (Rom. 1:19-21; 2:1-15) as well as by experience; further, that man still left in the

position of a free agent, can either by and through the power of the grace of restoration accept or else reject the divine instruction and the good offered by God in His Son Jesus Christ—that he can incline in a degree his heart unto them, or turn away and withdraw himself from them. Deut. 11:26-28; 30:15-20. This freedom is so essential to the nature of a rational being that without it his actions could not be reasonably judged as good or bad, nor could they, if virtuous, deserve reward, or, if sinful, come under righteous condemnation, which, however, is most certainly the case with man.

For this reason we acknowledge, that, although without God's prevenient grace it is entirely impossible for our corrupt nature to seek, choose and apprehend the good, and even if the universal gift of divine grace alone arouses and assists our nature, these acts still come very hard and are possible only in a rudimentary way—yet they must, nevertheless, not be considered as wholly impossible, but rather as actually possible, in a way since the Lord our God certainly deals with us so that, on the one hand, He holds out to us commands (Ex. 20:3-17; Matt. 17:5), counsel (Rev. 3:18), motives (Isa. 55:1-7; II Cor. 5:11, 18-21; 6:1), promises (Isa. 55; Matt. 11:28, 29; II Cor. 6:17, 18), blessings for good undertakings (Isa. 45:22; Luke 18:29, 30), and finally an eternal reward (Matt. 25), but on the other hand, warning (Gen. 4:6, 7; I Cor. 10:11), threatenings (Deut. 27:26), chastisements (Heb. 12:5-11; I Pet. 1:6, 7; Rev. 3:19), and terrible judgments (Deut. 28:15; 29:19, 20) both temporal (Isa. 29:13-15) and eternal (Matt. 25:46); all of which would otherwise seem strange and inconsistent. Deut. 32:3, 4.

However, from what has thus far been said in a general way, we must be careful not to draw the conclusion that man is as capable to use his free agency aright in spiritual things as he is in natural things. Luke 12:54-57. Far be it! The contrary is plainly taught not only by the Holy Scripture (I Cor. 2:14), but also by reason and our daily experience. Matt. 7:13.

For this reason we conclude that ordinary impulses in the direction of good, moving simply on the plane of reason, must be carefully distinguished from those that are spiritual, far more powerful (Ezek. 36:25-27), and special (Rom. 9:12-18); that the former, nevertheless, are sufficient to awaken in us certain incipient longings (Prov. 2:4-7), and that such seeking is the God-ordained way to obtain more (I Chron. 28:9; Prov. 8:17; Matt. 7:7) yet by grace (Isa. 55:7); that, accordingly, fallen man, to whom grace has come (Micah 6:8; Rev. 3:20), has still the ability left to him to take to heart more or less the general promptings of grace, to prove them, to adapt himself to them, and wait for more grace. Psalms 37:24; 27:14; Isa. 40:31; Lam. 3:24, 25. (See further Art. 17.)

XII. Of the Person of the Redeemer and His Appearing in the Flesh.

When the time was fulfilled (Gal. 4:4) of which the prophets had spoken (Gen. 49:10; Dan. 9:24), God let His Son proceed forth from Himself (John 8:42; 16:28) and sent Him into the world (John 6:38), into the womb of a highly favored virgin named Mary (Luke 1:27, 28), where and by whom He (the seed of the woman, Gen. 3:15; of Abraham, Gal. 3:16-19; of David, Rom. 1:3) was conceived through divine quickening and overshadowing of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35); became partaker of flesh and blood, and was made like unto us in all things yet without sin (Heb. 2:14-17; 4:15), in that in the natur-

al course of time He was born of her, as it was written, in Bethlehem (Luke 2:11; Micah 5:1), and was called Jesus because He should save His people from their sins. Matt. 1:21.

This Jesus, born of Mary in Bethlehem and brought up in Nazareth (Matt. 2:23), is the one whom we confess to be Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16) the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14), the Word which was with God and was God (John 1:1; Gen. 1:3; I John 1:1), and became flesh. John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:7-11. Not as though the divine essence of the eternal Word had been changed to visible, mortal flesh or a visible man (Heb. 1:8-12), and had ceased to be Spirit, Divinity or God (I Tim. 3:16), but so, that the eternal Son of God (Micah 5:2) continued to be what He was before (John 3:13; Col. 1:17; Rev. 22:13), namely God (Rom. 9:5) and Spirit (II Cor. 3:17; I Cor. 15:45-47), and became what He was not, namely flesh or man.

Therefore we confess that Jesus is our Immanuel, true God and man in one person (Col. 2:9; I Tim. 3:16), and thus qualified and fitted to be a redeemer and the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. I John 2:1, 2.

XIII. Of the Work of Redemption in General.

The great purpose for which God the Father out of His infinite love to man thus gave His Son Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Rom. 5), and to which end the Son of God willingly humbled Himself (Eph. 5:2; Phil. 2:7), was to reconcile unto God the world lost in sin (II Cor. 5:19), to redeem it (Heb. 2:15, 17) and to save it. I Tim. 1:15.

To accomplish fully this great work committed to Him of the Father (John 17:4), for which, according to the divine purpose and preordination He was anointed and set apart even before the foundation of the world, and which out of pure love and obedience He took upon Himself (Heb. 10:4; 9:10), He must be first put under the law (Gal. 4:4, 5) that by a perfect obedience He might fulfill all its demands (Matt. 5:17-18); and this He actually did. John 17:4.

Having lived a holy and spotless life (Heb. 7:26; I Pet. 2:22, 23) to the age of about thirty years (Luke 3:23), fully satisfying in this respect the will and pleasure of the Father, He received a public approval from heaven (Matt. 3:16, 17) and was as to His human nature also anointed and endowed in an especial manner with the Holy Ghost from God the Father (Acts 10:38) to carry out the momentous work of salvation (Col. 1:19, 20), in which He as our mediator (I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:15; 12:24) approved Himself in the exalted threefold capacity as a prophet (Luke 24:19), high priest (Heb. 10:21) and king (John 12:15; 18:37), whom God had promised to send into the world, and whom we must hear (Deut. 18:15-18), believe (John 3:16; 6:40, 47), and obey (John 8:12; 10:27-30), as will be more fully shown in the following chapters.

XIV. Of Christ's Office as Prophet.

After the Son of God had been solemnly anointed and had passed victoriously through sundry hellish temptations (Luke 4:1-13; Mark 1:12-15, 22) He presented Himself at once to the world (Matt. 4:17) as the great prophet (Luke 7:16) who had been promised of God (Acts 3:22, 23; Deut. 18:15, 18), in that He taught the way of God in truth (Matt. 22:16) as one who had authority (Mark 1:22) and with a wisdom (Matt. 13:54)

which no one could withstand; preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, repentance and faith (Mark 1:14, 15); testified likewise how one must walk to be pleasing to God (Matt. 5:3-12), foretold also things to come (Matt. 20:18, 19; 21:2; 24:2); and confirmed it all with many wonderful miracles. Matt. 11:5. Moreover, He lived just as He taught (John 8:46) and has thus left us both in His teaching and His life an example which we are to follow. I Pet. 2:21.

Further, as the Lord Christ taught and led His people under the old covenant as the angel of God's presence, through Moses and all the prophets, in whom His Spirit was, and as He now did the same in His own person, so He continued His teaching office through His apostles and evangelists (Eph. 4:11; Luke 10:1-7), whom He called (Luke 9:1-6), instructed (Acts 1:2, 3), endowed with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4), and sent forth (John 20:21) to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8. And these were faithful even unto death and kept back nothing that is profitable (Acts 20:20, 24) but declared the whole counsel of God unto salvation, to which God also bore witness by signs and wonders and by manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will. Heb. 2:4.

The Lord Jesus also continues His work as teacher by means of His holy Word, seeing He has given a short yet sufficiently complete account of His holy life and divine teaching as well as of those of His holy apostles to be transmitted in the books of the New Testament, in which, together with the books of the Old Testament, there is included everything needful to a rule of faith and life. (See Art. 2). Through the teaching, reading, and hearing of this Word He continues to bring about faith, conversion and sanctification, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Rom. 1:16.

Finally the Lord Jesus teaches also through the Spirit according to His promise, both convincing and winning the unbelieving, and leading the believers into all truth. John 16:13. In this work the Spirit never contradicts the true meaning of the written Word (Jas. 3:11; 1:17), but enlightens the believer's mind to a right understanding of the Word (Luke 24:45), gives them assurance of its truth, and brings to remembrance the things that the Lord has spoken. John 14:26.

It is, therefore, necessary to prove the spirits whether they are of God (I John 4:1) and to hold fast to the unerring Word of God (II Tim. 3:14-17; II Pet. 1:19-21) concerning which we have received assurance and know who has taught us the same. Gal. 1:6-12.

XV. Of Christ as High Priest.

As the true high priest (Heb. 4:14) and only mediator of the new and eternal covenant (I Tim. 2:5), Christ prayed to His heavenly Father for His apostles and also for them that should believe on Him through their word (John 17:9, 20), yea even for those who crucified Him and would take His life. Luke 23:34.

Moreover, He obediently took upon Himself the most grievous suffering (Phil. 2:8) and offered Himself through the eternal Spirit without blemish unto God (Heb. 9:14), both in soul and body, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17; 7:26, 27). We believe that this most bitter suffering of soul as well as of body, begun in Gethsemane and finished on Calvary, is an offering whose efficacy is eternal (Heb. 9:12; Isa. 53) and by which He has perfected forever them that come to God through Him, are obedient to Him, and are sanc-

tified. Heb. 10:14. We take the obedience of the Son of God, His precious suffering, shed blood, and sacrificial death on the cross once for all (I Pet. 2:24) to be the ransom (Matt. 20:28; I Tim. 2:6) or price (Heb. 9:13, 14) of our redemption, all-sufficient for the sins of the whole world (I John 2:2); through which, accordingly, all who truly believe on Him, are reconciled with God (II Cor. 5:19-21), are brought into a condition of peace, and attain unto a well grounded hope and assurance of eternal life. Rom. 5:1, 5, 9, 10.

Now, when the Lord Jesus Christ had finished His high-priestly work upon earth through His death, He was buried and on the third day arose again from the dead and appeared unto the apostles and many others (I Cor. 15) with many infallible proofs by the space of forty days. Acts 1:3, 9-12. Thereafter He ascended into heaven as a triumphant victor (Eph. 4:8; Col. 2:15) before the eyes of all His faithful apostles (Luke 24:50-52) and sat down at the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19) crowned with honor and glory. Heb. 2:9; John 17:5.

There, and thus clothed, He continues His holy office as our high priest. Heb. 8:1. For as He is the servant of the true tabernacle, He has entered not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood once into heaven itself (Heb. 9:11, 24), to appear before the face of God in behalf of the believers. Wherefore He is called of God a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek (Heb. 5:10; Psa. 110:4) to the great comfort of the believers in their infirmities. Heb. 4:14-16. And as He has an everlasting priesthood, since He abides forever, He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Heb. 7:24, 25; I John 2:1, 2.

Lastly, as it was the part of the high priest, after completing the offering of atonement, to return to the waiting and praying people to bless them, so Christ, the great High Priest, is continually bestowing upon His own the fruit, the power, and the sufficiency of His sacrifice that they may benefit by them. Acts 3:26. Having the power and the right to forgive sins (Mark 2:10; Matt. 28:18), He grants this blessing to the penitent (Acts 5:31); through His blood of sprinkling He purges the conscience from dead works (Heb. 9:14) and thus gives boldness and confidence to draw nigh unto God. Eph. 3:12. He baptizes them with His Spirit (John 1:33), holds spiritual and intimate communion with them (Rev. 3:20; John 14:21-23), yea, and He makes His holy and redeemed people themselves to be a royal priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. I Pet. 2:5, 9.

From all this follows self-evidently that the Levitical priesthood (Heb. 10:5-9), and with it the whole ceremonial law, has been fulfilled, has come to an end, and has been abolished. The law had only the shadow of good things to come (Heb. 10:1) and it ended in Christ (Rom. 10:4) to whom be glory forever. Amen!

XVI. Of Christ as King.

The Lord Jesus Christ as the one promised and heavenly King of the new covenant (Psa. 2:6; Jer. 23:5; Luke 1:32, 33), having by His glorious resurrection proved Himself victor over the devil, over death and the grave, (Col. 2:15; II Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14, 15) at once began to set up and order His spiritual kingdom when He gave His apostles command and instruction as to

how the same should be established (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47); yet more especially when He ascended on high (Eph. 4:8), entered into His glory (Luke 24:26), and sat down on the right hand of His Father in heaven (Heb. 1:3) of which He gave the strongest proof when on the day of Pentecost He poured forth abundantly the Holy Spirit upon His apostles. Acts 2:33-36.

Thenceforth the kingdom of God came with power, so that from that day on, through the instrumentality of the apostles, great numbers of believing and spiritually minded people were gathered (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:32, 33) who confessed Jesus Christ as their Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:9-11.

The spiritual kingdom, generally called the kingdom of heaven, the Lord Jesus has committed in part to His servants here on earth to administer according to the spiritual laws of His kingdom. Eph. 4:11, 12; I Pet. 5:1-4. Yet above all and in particular He Himself administers the same direct from heaven. He rules the hearts of His people through the Holy Spirit (John 16:13; 14:26), in accordance with His Word, with passionate love; He protects and shelters them as under His wings, equips them with spiritual weapons against His and their enemies (Eph. 6:11-18), and is to them a very present help in trouble so that in Him they are more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37); He prepares for them a place in heaven (John 14:2) and will by grace give victory and a crown of righteousness in the life eternal (II Tim. 4:7, 8) to all who continue faithful to Him in the spiritual conflict with sin and Satan (Rev. 2:10; Matt. 24:13); but His enemies He will put under His feet. Matt. 22:24.

XVII. Of the Universal Offer of Grace and the Call of God Unto Faith.

By universal grace as we confess it (Tit. 2:11-14) we do not understand that God dispenses gifts and favors alike great to all men and at all times (See Art. IX) even not under the preaching of the Gospel; much less that through the death of Christ all men without distinction are reconciled with God (John 3:36) and received and adopted as children (John 1:12), for then would conversion (Mark 1:15), regeneration (John 3:3), and a willingness to become reconciled to God (II Cor. 5:20) be no longer necessary, upon which, however, the gospel lays great stress (Acts 2:38-40), ascribing the grace of justification only to them who truly believe. Rom. 3:22, 25, 26; Acts 10:43; 13:39.

We understand rather, thereby, in the first place, the all-including love of God and of Jesus Christ in the work of salvation (John 3:16), seeing that the Lord Jesus died not only for many (Matt. 20:28) but for all men (II Cor. 5:15; I Tim. 2:5, 6; Heb. 2:9) not only for the reconciliation of the believers (John 10:15; Acts 20:28) but for the sins of the whole world (I John 2:2); that, namely, God so reconciled the world unto Himself (II Cor. 5:19) that He in view of the perfect obedience (Rom. 5:18, 19) and death (Isa. 53:11, 12) of Christ—as the ransom for all—has made His throne of grace accessible (Heb. 10:19-22) to all sinners (I Tim. 1:15; Luke 19:10) without distinction (Rom. 10:12; 2:11; Isa. 45:22), and therefore has ordered that universal forgiveness be proclaimed (Acts 17:30) to all the world (Mark 16:15, 16), so that everyone who believes (John 3:15) and is converted (Luke 24:47) shall not perish but shall have forgiveness of sins and inherit eternal life (Acts

13:38, 39). Wherefore, then, we have confidence that no one will be eternally damned for Adam's transgression, but indeed for his own obstinacy, his unbelief, his disobedience, etc., and that thus we need not fear condemnation for little children, but rather we may cherish for them the hope of the kingdom of God for Christ's sake. Mark 10:13-16.

Again we confess to believe that with whatever power (Gal. 2:8; Eph. 1:19) and absolute authority (Matt. 20:15; I Cor. 12:11; Eph. 1:11) it may please God to work at certain times to bring about conviction and conversion (Isa. 44:3), and though some nations and persons are preferred before others (Luke 8:10), all of which we heartily believe and reverently adore—it is yet withal sufficiently plain and evident that God's work of grace to incite man to faith and conversion (Acts 3:26) is so far general that He does not altogether pass by any one (Rom. 1:20; 2:14, 15) but manifests to all and every one His goodness (Psa. 145:9) and justice, and even the common mercies of His providence have this in view (Acts 17:27) and lead to this end. Rom. 2:4.

Seeing then, as we do, that all grace shown by God to fallen man from the gates of Paradise on through all times, is the fruit only and solely of Christ's mediation, and that it has pleased God to reveal the same very differently and by degrees, we regard ourselves as both disqualified (I Cor. 4:5; Rom. 14:4) and unable to define with exactness what the Lord our God through His omnipresent Spirit and His unceasing works of providence does and will do (Job 33:14, 24, 28-30), in the consciences of such nations and persons who hitherto have been deprived of the knowledge of the gospel. For this reason we hold it best to maintain a holy silence on this point, since we know that God's decisions are always in

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themselves in the proffered hope (Heb. 6:18; 10:19-23; Rom. 3:24, 25) and also to commend it to all others and invite souls thereto (Rev. 22:17) as the experience of all those who are in any measure constrained by the love of Christ proves. II Cor. 5:13-15.

XVIII. Of Faith by Which We Partake of the Grace of God in Christ.

We hold that it is not enough to have simply a historical knowledge of the truth (Rom. 2:17-24), or to assent to it, or even to be able to talk eloquently and beautifully about it (I Cor. 4:20); more particularly that true faith does not consist in a self-assumed favorable position (John 8:32, 33; Matt. 3:9; Rom. 2:28, 29; 9:6-8) and assurance (Matt. 7:21, 22; 15:13; John 3:27), for this may all be found apart from the heart-renewing and cleansing power (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Acts 15:9), apart from true love (II Thess. 2:10) and good works (Matt. 7:17) without which true faith unto righteousness (Rom. 10:10) can not exist. Jas. 2:17; Gal. 5:6.

Saving faith therefore includes both a profound conviction (Heb. 11:1) and understanding of divine truth, and an appreciation of its sublimity and worth (Matt. 13:44-46. It is thus, viewed in its inception, nothing less than a light from God shining in our souls. II Cor. 4:6. Further, faith may be defined as including a hearty consent (Rom. 7:16), approval (Psa. 119:128) and appropriation (Psa. 119:97) of all God's testimonies (Psa. 19:7) promises (Psa. 119:49, 50) and blessings (Psa. 116:12), especially the gift of His Son, and all this out of love (I John 4:8, 19) combined with a deep reverence and sense of unworthiness (Luke 7:6); frequently also with much anxiety and fear so that the joy in the Holy Spirit (I Thess. 1:6), which should otherwise follow without fail, may for a time remain suppressed through the weakness of the faith.

This faith naturally begets a passionate desire to partake by experience of the whole Christ and in consequence of this an humble looking for and to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29; 3:14, 15). In other words, it amounts to fleeing to Christ for refuge (Heb. 6:18; Matt. 11:28, 29), actually accepting Him in all respects (though in varying degrees as to clearness and power according to the measure of faith) with much crying for mercy (Matt. 9:27), repentance and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31; Matt. 8:2; Psa. 51:1-17) and a participation in all the blessings He has obtained for us. John 1:16; I John 5:12.

To this fleeing for refuge in such a frame of mind there belongs a sincere prayer for acceptance (Luke 15:19) an actual self-surrender and unfeigned submission (Isa. 44:5; Acts 16:30), henceforth not to live unto one's self but unto Him who died for us and rose again (II Cor. 5:15), the soul being constrained thereto by love, with great desire (II Cor. 5:9, 14) and joy. Prov. 21:15.

In all this, faith acts and is sustained (Heb. 11:33-38) by a deeply felt trust in God (Rom. 4:3), holding Him to be faithful that promised (Rom. 10:23) and that having not spared His own Son, He will with Him freely give us all things (Rom. 8:32; Heb. 4:16), which trust is fully answered by His actual dealings in His own time.

This true faith we recognize as a gift of God (Phil. 1:29; Eph. 2:8) wrought in us (Phil. 1:6; I Cor. 12:7-11; II Thess. 1:11) through His Word (Rom. 10:17) and by His Spirit (Acts 16:14; Luke 24:45; John 16:8, 15) out of free grace, yet so that in order to its proper reception it is necessary that we give an attentive ear to what the

Lord says (Isa. 55:3-7) and do not harden our hearts against it (Prov. 1:23-33; 28:13, 14; Heb. 3:7, 8) but give room to the power of conviction and yield to it (Mark 4:23-25); for in them that draw back the Lord has no pleasure. Heb. 10:38; 3:18, 19.

By this faith one becomes a child of God (Gal. 3:26), overcomes the world (I John 5:4), and is fortified against the crafty attacks of the devil (Eph. 6:16); but without it, it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11:6. As faith is the ordained means of becoming a partaker of the grace of God in Christ, so it is also the means of abiding in Christ, of holding fast to Him, of becoming more intimately united with Him, and of drawing from Him, as the head of the body or as the true vine, all spiritual life power and thus walk worthy of God who has called us unto His kingdom and glory. I Thess. 2:12.

XIX. Of Conversion and the New Birth.

Since the heart of man is evil from his youth (Gen. 8:21; John 3:6) and carnally-minded (Rom. 8:5) which is enmity against God (Rom. 8:7), it is self-evident that such a faith as set forth in the preceding chapter includes and brings about a sincere amending of one's way (Eph. 4:25-29; I Pet. 4:2-4), conversion (Acts 3:19) and a newness of life. Rom. 6:4, 11; 8:1, 4. Therefore equally as strong emphasis is laid upon conversion as upon faith (Matt. 18:3; Acts 2:38) and the Lord Jesus has declared most solemnly, that no one can see the kingdom of God unless he be born again. John 3:3; Luke 13:3-5.

This teaches us that all men must be converted if they are to receive remission of sins (Isa. 45:22; Luke 24:47), be fitted for fellowship with God who is light (I John 1:5-7) and bring forth good fruit (Matt. 12:33-35; John 15:8); since neither profession (Matt. 7:21) nor baptism, nor the Lord's Supper, nor any other outward act apart from regeneration can avail anything to please God. Gal. 5:6; 6:15; Eph. 4:22-24.

That this essential experience of conversion may be truly a turning unto the Lord (Hos. 14:2; Jer. 4:1), it is not sufficient that one be convinced in his conscience that he must leave the evil and do good, for this is found among the heathen (Rom. 2:14, 15) and with many of the worst sinners. Acts 24:25. Again, it is not enough to make some good resolutions now and then (Matt. 21:28-30), or to do this or that good deed (Mark 6:20) without a sincere turning of the heart to God (Acts 8:21), for in this way one may indeed come near to the kingdom of God (Matt. 13:20-22; Mark 12:34) and yet be excluded from it just the same. Matt. 25:11, 12; Luke 13:24. But in order to a true conversion there must be such an understanding and conviction of sin (Psa. 51; John 16:8) that we repent of it not only because of the punishment that it brings, but primarily because through it we have dishonored, offended and lost God (Isa. 1:2-4; Deut. 32:5, 6; Dan. 9:5-19); for it is sorrow for God that worketh unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret. II Cor. 7:10. They who thus sorrow, shall be comforted. Matt. 5:4. Those who are thus exercised abhor themselves (Job. 42:6; Ezek. 36:31), hate and leave sin (Psa. 119:104), and from the heart make the resolve,—I will arise (Luke 15:18), I will confess. Psa. 32:5. And this they do in that they penitently plead for forgiveness (Luke 18:13; Psa. 51), make a complete surrender of their will (Rom. 6:17), and seek to know (Acts 22:10) and to do (Psa. 40:8; Eph. 6:6) what is well-pleasing unto the Lord. Eph. 5:10.

In view of the inner renewing of the understanding and the will (Rom. 12:2; Tit. 3:5) as well as of the outward active change and renewing of the life (Matt. 18:3; Rom. 6:4), this true conversion is also called a new birth, a being born again (John 3:7), a new creation (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10-15) and the like, because the change of condition and activity that is brought about is as though a heart of stone had been removed and one of flesh received, upon which the Lord would write His law. Ezek. 36. The effect is therefore nothing less than a transition from sin to virtue (Rom. 6:17-22), from death unto life (I John 3:14), from darkness to light (Eph. 5:8), from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:18), etc., though weak in its inception and needing growth (Col. 1:11-14) and strengthening. Eph. 6:10.

This true conversion or new birth is therefore a spiritual life, which, like faith, comes from God (Eph. 4:18; Rom. 6:11; Gal. 2:19, 20; Acts 11:18; Tit. 3:5; Psal. 51:10; a gift of God in Christ for which we must ask and return thanks as for a blessing upon which depends our whole happiness. Tit. 3:5; I Pet. 1:3, 21-23; 2:25). Nevertheless, to obtain it, there is required on our part, accompanying the divine work of grace and through the same, earnest effort (Luke 8:18; 13:24; Jas. 1:21) and great diligence as is plainly evident from the many exhortations and promises (Ezek. 18:30-32; Mark 1:15; Isa. 55:7; Luke 7:30-34; Matt. 11:20) as well as warnings and rebukes pointing this way.

XX. Of Justification and Faith.

Through faith, which, as shown above, stands directly connected with conversion and the new birth, a poor, grief-stricken sinner (Matt. 5:3; Luke 18:13) obtains true justification from God (Rom. 3:24-26; 8:33), not for any merit of his own, but alone out of grace (Tit. 3:5) by virtue of the full obedience and sufficient offering of Christ (Rom. 5:18, 19; Heb. 10:10-14), being made free and absolved from all his sins (Acts 13:38, 39), however great they may be (Isa. 1:18; Psal. 32; Psal. 51; Rom. 5:6-10) called into fellowship with Christ (I Cor. 1:9, and made a rightful partaker of Him (Heb. 3:14) and of the blessings of salvation which He obtained for His people (I Cor. 1:30) and which out of His fullness and in His wisdom He gives each in His time. Eph. 4:7; John 1:14-16.

In the counsel of God this boon, great beyond all comprehension (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-10), has been accomplished and bestowed once for all (II Cor. 5:17-19) when the Son of God, as the surety of a better covenant (Heb. 7:22) and the Redeemer of His people, offered (I Tim. 2:5, 6; Heb. 10:4-10), accomplished (John 17:4) and suffered (Phil. 2:8-10) in their stead, all that the offended majesty of God demanded to be reconciled with the world. Wherefore the Son of God could say on the cross as He gave His soul into death, "It is finished" (John 19:30); and to this also bear witness the rending of the veil (Heb. 10:14-20), Christ's glorious resurrection and ascension (Rom. 1:4; 4:18-25), the giving of the Holy Spirit, and the preaching of the gospel in all the world.

But before the tribunal of conscience this comes to pass only then when true faith is exercised, and not before, since faith is distinctly the God-ordained means (John 3:16; 6:40) of becoming actually and personally a partaker of Christ and the blessings He obtained for us. For this reason evangelical justification is always associated with faith (Rom. 3:22, 28, 30; John 3:16-18, 36) and remains thus inseparably associated.

Thus it is (as set forth in Art. 18) that a really convicted sinner, poor (Isa. 66:2) and heavy laden (Matt. 11:28), flies for refuge to this gracious Christ. Utterly undone in himself, he hungers after Christ with weeping and sighing (Jer. 3:21, 22), falls at His feet praying for forgiveness of sins and adoption into the sonship of God (II Cor. 6:16-18; Gal. 4:4-6); he tastes and realizes that the Lord is gracious (I Pet. 2:3) in that He covers our nakedness and condescends to dwell in us (John 14:23; Eph. 3:17) and we are found in Him. Rom. 8:1; Phil. 3:9. We come praying that we may be healed of our infirmities (Matt. 9:12), of our spiritual blindness (Isa. 35:5; Eph. 1:18; Rev. 3:18), deafness, barrenness (Psal. 63:1; 119:81-83), leprosy (Psal. 38:3-8; Isa. 1:6), and every form of spiritual disease (Psal. 103:3); that He baptize us with His Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11); that He satisfy our hunger and thirst with heavenly food and drink (John 6:48-51; 7:37, 38), and make us partakers of His divine nature (II Pet. 1:2-4) so that His mind may be in us (Phil. 2:5; Matt. 5:44-48), that by His grace our old man may be crucified with Him. (Rom. 6:4-6; Gal. 5:24) and His life may be manifested in us (II Cor. 4:10, 11) being conformed unto His death and risen again to a newness of life thus to know by personal experience the power of His resurrection (Phil. 3:10; Eph. 1:19, 20) to the praise and glory of His heavenly Father. Rom. 6:17.

This is what we call knowing Christ after the Spirit whereby eternal life is received (John 10:4, 14; 17:3), and we frankly submit that without this spiritual knowledge, this inward exercise and experience, a knowledge of Christ historically or according to the letter does not suffice unto salvation. Rom. 2:14-20, 28, 29; I Cor. 13:1-3. However, the soul that in truth seeks refuge in Christ (Psal. 145:18) with steadfastness in prayer (Luke 18:7; Rom. 12:12) we believe will assuredly find grace (Matt. 7:7-11) in God's own time, and be received into the covenant of God (II Cor. 6:18) whereby everyone thus constituted, becomes the property of Jesus Christ. II Tim. 2:19.

The most certain outward proof of this great work of salvation, we hold is to be found in the fruits of righteousness, such as unfeigned love to God (I Cor. 8:3; Luke 7:47) and to the brethren (I John 3:14) yea to all men, active godliness (I John 3:18, 19) and an earnest observance of God's commandments (I John 5:1-4). The inward verification is found in the experience of peace with God (Rom. 5:1; Isa. 32:17), a new spiritual joy (Isa. 29:19; 61:10), as also a strong assurance (Rom. 8:38, 39) and sealing of the Holy Spirit (II Cor. 1:21, 22; 5:5; Rom. 8:16; Eph. 1:13; 4:7, 30; I John 4:13); and all this according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

XXI. Of Good Works, or the Piety of True Believers.

By good works, for which the believers in Christ Jesus are created that they should walk in them (Eph. 2:10), those works must not be meant which are only outward (Luke 11:39) and have simply the appearance of good like the works of the Pharisees (Matt. 23:28): nor those that are performed from natural or civil motives (Matt. 5:44-47; Luke 6:32) which, though good and becoming in themselves, are not distinctly characteristic of true Christianity; and not those which spring out of a servile or legal spirit (John 15:15; Gal. 4:7; Rom. 9:31, 32; 10:1-4) more out of fear and compulsion (Rom. 8:15; I John 4:18) than out of love (Gal. 5:6; I Tim. 1:5); for the disciple of Christ is called unto a better righteousness than is found in all these. Matt. 5:20.

Therefore we hold those only to be good works which are well pleasing to God in Christ (I Pet. 2:5; Rom. 12:1, 2; Heb. 12:28), being wrought in God (John 3:21), proceeding out of faith (Heb. 11:6) and love (I John 4:8) and true thankfulness (I John 4:19) out of a changed and renewed mind (Eph. 5:8-10; Rom. 12:2), a child-like fear (Prov. 14:27), in short out of a fellowship with Christ (John 15:5) in and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Gal. 5:22-24; Eph. 5:9-11.

In our relation to God this life requires an humble walking with Him (Micah 6:8) and before His face (Gen. 17:1) in heart-felt love (Matt. 22:37-40; Eph. 5:1, 2), gratitude (Col. 1:12), praise (I Cor. 6:20), child-like fear (I Pet. 1:17), obedience (Eph. 6:6), etc.

In relation to our fellowmen, good works consist in a practical and unwearying exercise of righteousness (Tit. 2:12; I John 3:18), forbearance (Phil. 4:5; Tit. 3:2; Jas. 3:17), gentleness (I Pet. 3:8; II Tim. 2:24; Phil. 2:3, 4), readiness to serve (Gal. 5:3), benevolence (I Tim. 6:17, 18; Heb. 3:16), etc., in the endeavor to promote the best interests of our neighbors both in soul and body (Lev. 19:17) and this not only of the brethren (Rom. 12:10; Heb. 13:1; I John 3:16) but of all (II Pet. 1:7; I Thess. 3:12) yea even of our enemies. Rom. 12:20.

In reference to one's self there is required a holy watchfulness and warfare (Luke 12:1-5; 17:3; 21:34; Eph. 6:10-18; Heb. 12:1-4, 12-17; II Pet. 3:17) against all manner of intemperance (Tit. 2:4-6; I Tim. 2:9, 10) and worldly lusts (II Pet. 1:4; I John 2:16), against all unclean affections and lusts of the flesh (Rom. 13:14; I Pet. 2:12), against pride (Rom. 11:20; Psal. 19:13) and all its miserable issues (Jas. 4:1-6; Matt. 15:19) such as hatred, envy, and anger; or thoughtless, frivolous, and harsh words (Gal. 5:19-21; Matt. 12:36; 5:37; Jas. 5:11, 12), corrupt speech (Eph. 4:29) and the like. Thus the deeds of the body of sin (Rom. 8:13; 7:23, 24) with all its members upon the earth, must be mortified (Col. 3:5) and the opposite virtues be put on (Col. 3:12-14) in order that we may live unto righteousness (I Pet. 2:24), increase in holiness (Heb. 12:14; Rev. 22:11) unto perfection in the fear of God. II Cor. 7:1; I Thess. 3:13.

XXII. Of Perseverance in Holiness.

The true believer applies himself with all diligence in this new spiritual life to walk worthily of the Lord (Col. 1:10, 11; I Thess. 2:12) and to be fruitful in good works, not only because he is called and in duty bound thereto (Eph. 4:1-3; II Pet. 1:5-10), but because by virtue of his new birth from God (I John 3:9) there is within him an inward impulse (Psal. 119:35) an inbred disposition to the same. II Cor. 5:9. He finds in it a holy delight (Rom. 7:22), a great spiritual, yea divine, peace and comfort (Acts 9:31), a growth in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:10, 11) and of Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:15), in short, the life of the soul. By a contrary course a believer does violence to his own soul (Prov. 8:36), pursues death (Rom. 6:16; 8:6) and brings upon himself great misery. I Tim. 6:10.

It is therefore contrary to the renewed nature of the believers and in antagonism with it, to sin. I John 3:6-9. Moreover, they are carefully watched over and kept (Psal. 23; Zech. 2:8; Jude 1) by the faithful Shepherd (John 10:1-16; Ezek. 34:11-31) and Bishop of their souls (I Pet. 2:25), as also by His heavenly Father who is greater than all (John 10:29), so that it is impossible for any power, however great, to pluck them out of such faithful hands in which they are kept unto salvation. I Pet. 1:5; John 10:28, 29.

Wherefore also it seems unnecessary that any one should teach them (I John 2:27) if they will but abide in Him constantly as they ought (I John 3:6) and will let that abide in them which they have heard from the beginning. I John 2:24.

But since they have this treasure in earthen vessels (II Cor. 4:7) and in their flesh there dwelleth no good thing (Rom. 7:18) but on the contrary a law that wars against the law of their mind (Rom. 7:23), since they are, moreover, surrounded by various seductions of the world (I John 2:16) and temptations of the devil (Eph. 6:11; I Pet. 5:8), and since the Lord permits all this that He may prove their faith and their obedience (Deut. 8:2, 16-18) and keep them in humility through the experience of their weakness (II Cor. 12:7); there is required of them, notwithstanding what has been said above, or rather by reason of it (I Pet. 1:5-7; Phil. 2:13), nothing less than resolute watchfulness and earnest care (I Cor. 6:13) that they may not fall back (I Tim. 1:6; 6:20, 21; Heb. 3:12), become slothful (Heb. 6:12; 3:13; Rom. 12:11), lose again that which they have already obtained (II John 8), fall from their stronghold (II Pet. 3:17), and be overcome of sin (II Pet. 2:20), as is shown to have been the case with many who at first ran well (Gal. 5:7) but afterward grew weary (Heb. 12:3-5) and were but scarcely brought back to the right path (I Pet. 4:18; Psal. 40:1, 2) not without agony of soul (II Sam. 24:14) and grievous chastisement (Psal. 38:1-19; 51; 130)—let alone that such escape is not recorded of all.

For this reason the Scriptures are everywhere full of admonition to take heed (Heb. 3:12-15), to watch (Luke 21:36; Rev. 16:15; Matt. 26:41), to pray always (Eph. 6:18; Luke 18:1; Rom. 12:12) that we may be zealous (Tit. 2:14), rich (I Tim. 6:18), full (Acts 9:36), yea abounding (I Cor. 15:58; II Cor. 9:8; II Pet. 1:8) in good works (Tit. 3:8); also that we consider one another (Heb. 10:24, 25), exhort one another (I Thess. 5:11) and pray with and for one another (Jas. 5:14-18); and it is indicated that even the most sincere hearts may not consider this to be useless or unnecessary. II Pet. 1:12, 13; 3:1; Phil. 3:1; Heb. 3:12-14.

XXIII. Of the Church of Christ.

All such believing, converted, and from the heart obedient ones (Rom. 6:17) together constitute as so many living stones (I Pet. 2:5) a holy temple in the Lord (I Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:20, 21), the true church (Heb. 12:23) the people of God (Heb. 4:9) the church of Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18) which He has purchased through His own blood. Acts 20:28.

This church, according to our confession, is but one (John 10:16), its members (I Cor. 12), however many (Rev. 7:9), and however varied in their achievements (Rom. 12:4-6), constituting but one body (Eph. 4:4-6) of which Jesus Christ is the head. Col. 1:18; 2:19. It is known by such names as, People of God (Heb. 4:9), His Saints (Psal. 50:4; Rom. 8:27), the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 13:18, 23; 25:1), the Kingdom of God (Matt. 12:28), the Kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13; Eph. 5:5), etc.

We call this church holy, not saying by this that its members are freed from the condition of sinfulness as long as they live here below (I John 1:8), but because they are sanctified by God the Father (Jude 1) in Christ Jesus (I Cor. 1:2) as well as by His sanctifying Himself for them (John 17:19; Eph. 5:26; Heb. 2:11) as also by

their actual separation from the world (II Pet. 1:4; II Cor. 6:17) and their transition into the kingdom of the Son of God (Col. 1:13) to serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. Luke 1:74, 75.

That this church is general we confess, because in it the distinction between different nationalities falls away (Rom. 10:12; Eph. 2:14) and its members are scattered in all parts of the earth (Matt. 24:31) among all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues (Rev. 5:9; 7:9); wherefore it is self-evident that this true church must not be sought among any particular nation or a particular class of professors (Acts 10:35; I Cor. 3:1-5) or limited to such to the exclusion of others. Luke 17:21-23; Matt. 24:26; Mark 13:21.

We call the church Christian, because we thereby mean only those that believe in Jesus Christ (John 1:12), are united with Him (John 15), belong to Him as His sheep, know Him, hear and follow Him (John 10:12, 27) and are therefore most tenderly loved (John 13:1), cherished (Eph. 5:29, 30), led, protected and kept (John 10) by Him, the weak as well as the strong. Isa. 40:11, 25-31.

Because of the intimate relation which the members of Christ's spiritual body sustain to each other, it is His expressed will (Mark 10:42-45; Matt. 23:11; Mark 9:35) that these His saints shall cultivate fellowship (John 13:34, 35; 17:22, 26) and this not in a restricted way (Matt. 5:46-48), as for instance only with those, with whom we are especially united, or with those whose association may seem desirable for our own benefit—for this would follow of itself—but with all believers in general (Acts 4:32; I Thess. 3:12; 5:15; II Thess. 1:3), even with those who seem to be the weakest (Acts 20:35; Rom. 14:1; I Thess. 5:14) and most insignificant (I Cor. 12:22-24), for such have special need of spiritual help. Gal. 6:1. Has not God put together and endowed the members of the body in such a manner that they must have care one for another (I Cor. 12:18-31; Rom. 12:3-10), so that those that are strong bear the infirmities of the weak and do not have pleasure in themselves? Rom. 15:1-3. For this reason it is not proper, on the one hand, that any among them think of others,—I have no need of thee (I Cor. 12:21, 22), nor on the other hand, that any one should possess his gifts for himself alone (Rom. 12:4-8); but it is the duty of each one to use the same as much as possible for the general good. Mark 4:21; I Pet. 4:10, 11.

From this arises the necessity for the assembling of believers in meetings (I Cor. 11:18; Acts 2:1), of which both the Lord Jesus and His apostles spoke with approval. Matt. 18:19, 20; Heb. 10:23-25. Therefore, too, our Lord Himself was a regular attendant at such meetings (Luke 4:16) and likewise His loving disciples came together even at the risk of their lives (John 20:19; Acts 12:12-16) thus to serve God publicly (Acts 13:1-3; Eph. 4:11, 12) and to praise Him together as with one accord (Rom. 15:6; Acts 11:18); to confess Jesus Christ before the whole world (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:10; I Tim. 6:12), cultivate fellowship among themselves (Acts 2:42) in edification (I Tim. 4:13; I Cor. 14:26) and continue in the breaking of bread (Acts 20:7) and in prayer. Matt. 18:19, 20. Therefore we pray all disciples of Christ Jesus not to withdraw themselves from such meetings out of obstinacy or self-conceit (Heb. 10:23-25) seeing that even the weakest and least talented can be useful in the Lord's temple if only their lives show a good example (I Pet. 3:1-5), if they are active in works of love (Rom. 16:1-6; Heb. 6:10) and by earnest intercession strengthen the hands of the servants of the Lord.

And though hypocrites (II Tim. 3:5; Jude 12) and the unconverted (Rom. 12:2) should mingle in great numbers with the flock of Jesus who are His own (John 10:14, 27), as has at all times been the case, sometimes less and sometimes more, in the outward fold of the church—a condition unavoidable on account of the limitations in our ability to discern the intents of the heart—the true disciples of Jesus (John 8:31) must not be soon alarmed or draw back discouraged, but must seek to let their lights shine (Matt. 5:13-16) and become pillars in the house of their God (Rev. 3:12), remembering that the Son of God represented the economy and outward union of the church as composed partly by foolish virgins. Matt. 25:2; Luke 17:34-36. Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His: and, Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness. II Tim. 2:19.

XXIV. Of the Ministry of the Church.

In reference to the ministers of the church we reverently consider that God is not a God of disorder (I Cor. 14:33) and that the Lord Jesus Christ in order to promote the above mentioned unity and edification of His people (Eph. 4:12-15) instituted various offices and conditions in His church (I Pet. 4:10), in that He gave some to be apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of His body (Eph. 4:11-16), etc.

Now, although our Lord did this directly (Mark 3:14; Luke 9:1, 2) and by original authority (John 15:16) as long as He was here on earth and as far as the first founders of His church were concerned (I Cor. 3:10-15; Eph. 2:20, 21), whom He therefore also endowed with much grace (II Cor. 4:5, 6) and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), we yet know full well that He must have willed and commanded (as Acts 1:2, 3 cf. Rom 15:18 suggests) that later on this be done indirectly, in respect to the regular and ordinary ministers of His church who should simply continue to build on the foundation already laid (I Cor. 3:11) and for this reason ever remained subordinate to the first, "the apostles." I Cor. 14:37. Moreover we hold ourselves assured of this partly because good order requires it (Matt. 12:25) and the promise of Christ's presence is given to the ministers of the gospel even unto the end of the world. (Matt. 28:20) and partly because it accords with the constant practice and directions of the apostles. Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5.

Therefore we believe it is the duty of all assemblies of saints that they observe this order after the example and direction of the apostles (II Tim. 2:2; I Cor. 11:2; II Thess. 2:15), namely, that they pray, as Christ commanded, that the Lord of the harvest send forth laborers into His harvest (Matt. 9:38); that they, however, also look about for such men as are of good report, possessing the gift of the Spirit and true faith (Acts 6:2-5) and other essential characteristics (II Tim. 2:24-26; Tit. 1:6-9) in the highest measure obtainable; further, that to such men, chosen with prayer (Acts 1:24) and with the greatest possible unanimity (thus not doing violence to the rights common to the whole brotherhood, much less disregarding the same) (Acts 6:5; Jas. 2:1-9; I Pet. 5:1-4), the administering of the affairs of the church shall be committed (Acts 6:3) and they solemnly installed in their office (I Tim. 4:14) provided they accept the call

and have first been examined and proved. I Tim. 3:10; I Cor. 9.

Those who have been thus lawfully chosen to the office of overseer (I Tim. 3:1) and have accepted the same in faith as of the Lord (Col. 4:17) have in consequence resting on them very weighty obligations toward the church, as the latter also has toward them. It is incumbent upon the shepherds and teachers to pasture the church of God, speaking always as is proper according to sound doctrine (I Tim. 6:3-5; II Tim. 1:13; Tit. 1:9; 2:1; I Pet. 5:1, 2), to proclaim unto her the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-28) and, as much as in them is, as faithful and wise stewards (I Cor. 4:1, 2; II Tim. 2:2; Luke 12:42) to impart unto each one in particular according to his circumstances and condition (I Cor. 9:22; I Tim. 5:1; I Pet. 4:10), to watch over the church (Heb. 13:17) and to set before her a good example in a godly life. I Pet. 5:3; I Tim. 4:12.

The deacons have likewise and in many points similar holy responsibilities. I Tim. 3:8-13. They must help to rule the church in the fear of God (I Tim. 5:17), collect the useful offerings, exercise faithful stewardship with these, and whatever other gifts there may be, and according to need distribute in the best way, impartially, with kindness and love. II Cor. 8:19-21; 9:5-14.

The church on her part owes it to hold them in honor (Phil. 2:29), to obey them (Heb. 13:17), to esteem them for their work's sake (I Thess. 5:12, 13), not lightly blame them (I Tim. 5:19), much less to grieve them and quench the Spirit (I Thess. 5:19) but to pray for them (Col. 4:3, 4; Phil. 1:19; 4:10-19; II Thess. 3:1, 2; Heb. 13:18) and kindly care for them with a proper competence (Gal. 6:6; Matt. 10:10; I Cor. 9:7-14; II Cor. 11:7-9; I Tim. 5:18); yet in all this is the respect for their office and administration not to be in any wise binding upon the conscience, except in so far as their words and management are in accord with the Word of God (Matt. 15:9; Phil. 3:17; I John 4:1; Matt. 7:16) as the only rule of faith and life. I Tim. 6:3-5.

XXV. Of Water Baptism.

In the church of Jesus Christ and through its ministers; we believe there is to be maintained not only the ministry of the Word but also, as has already been said, the ordinances commanded by the Lord, namely baptism and the Lord's Supper. (Matt. 28:19, 20—"Go ye, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." R. V.). The first of these is to be a sign and a means of incorporation (Gal. 3:27; I Cor. 12:13), the second a means of strengthening in the covenant with God (Luke 22:19, 20) and in communion with Christ. I Cor. 10:16.

Concerning the act of holy baptism we understand it to be an immersing of the whole body in water (Rom. 6:4; Matt. 3:16; Acts 8:37, 38), or a liberal sprinkling with water (which latter mode we in these northern latitudes consider more generally appropriate, since the same blessings are signified by it) and this most solemnly into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19), God on His account thus giving most positive assurance of the benefits of His covenant of grace, that every one truly believing in Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:10) and penitently seeking refuge in Him to lay hold of the hope set before us (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 6:18) shall certainly and truly partake of the

blessings signified thereby, namely, the washing away of sins through the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5) together with all the blessed results that follow. Rom. 8:17, 28-39.

On the part of the believer to be baptized this ordinance is also exceedingly important and precious in that he, by the act of presenting himself for baptism, most solemnly professes his faith in Jesus Christ and His blood (Rom. 3:25), that in Him are to be found righteousness and strength (Isa. 45:24), and that he imploringly prays to be permitted to partake thereof; that as much as in him is, he lays hold on the Savior (John 1:12) and most humbly offers and surrenders himself to Him (Luke 9:23; 14:26, 27; Matt. 10:37) out of gratitude and reciprocating love (I John 4:19; II Cor. 5:14, 15; Eph. 5:2) to live for His honor and glory. Isa. 44:5; Rom. 6:16, 17; 12:1.

If Christian water baptism is thus devoutly desired (Acts 8:36), administered (II Cor. 3:6), and received (Acts 2:41; I Thess. 2:13), we hold it in high esteem as a means of communicating and receiving spiritual blessings (I Pet. 3:20, 21), nothing less than a washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. Tit. 3:5; Eph. 5:26. This blessed result and work is, however, not obtained through the outward element of the water (I Pet. 3:21, "even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but a prayer addressed to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,"—Parallel Bible), but through the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Tit. 3:5), only on the ground of true faith and the searching of a good conscience before God, wherefore in the absence of this condition in the one baptized the blessing is not found. Acts 8:21.

Therefore it is, in our estimation, self-evident that children in their infancy are not qualified to receive the Christian rite of water baptism because they can neither understand nor believe these things. Rom 10:14. Further, it does not seem to us right to administer this sacredly important covenant act after the manner of the fleshly law of circumcision and the condition of the church in its infancy (Gal. 4:1-3; 5:1-6; Heb. 7:18, 19; 8:7-12; 10:19-22; John 4:23, 24) on the ground of a superficial assertion (Rom. 2:29; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11-15) that baptism has taken the place of circumcision, seeing that in the church of the New Testament everything is founded on grace and truth (John 1:17), or on the reality of the things typified (Heb. 10:1). Neither can we assent to infant baptism on the strength of the indefinite and uncertain accounts of the baptizing of Jewish proselytes which are founded on the Jewish Talmud, a book known to be spun through with many fabulous tales. Finally, and of more especial weight is the fact that in all the books of the New Testament we do not find a single convincing indication that in the early church any but grown people were baptized. Of the households that were baptized there are everywhere things said that are not applicable to little children (Acts 10:2, 47, 48; 16:15, 34) and in the most detailed reports we find indeed that more and more were added to the church of such as believed in the Lord, both of men and women (Acts 5:14), but of the baptizing of children there is nowhere any mention. Acts 8:12.

Since then there is not a single plain evidence concerning infant baptism; since salvation does not depend on any outward sign; since every testimony and narration in the Holy Scriptures points only to the baptism of grown persons, even as the nature of the case demands; since the Son of God Himself has led the way otherwise,

and it is well known that in the first centuries the most eminent teachers of the church, though born of believing parents, were baptized only when they had come to years, and that it was not without serious complaint and strong opposition that in the second and third centuries infant baptism increased and prevailed: we therefore come to the conclusion that we must wait with baptism until our children attain to years of riper understanding, that we must carefully instruct them from youth up (II Tim. 3:15), pray with them and for them, lay before them the importance of the matter, and the necessity of faith and conversion, and that in this we must keep on and on. As many of them as in the course of time with constancy confess their faith, their repentance and a decision for the good, and also in their lives do not manifest the contrary, shall be baptized, we believe, and added to the church, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16) according to the example of the apostolic church.

XXVI. Of the Holy Supper.

By the Supper of the Lord we understand the sacred and solemn act of the Lord with His disciples in the night in which He was betrayed (I Cor. 11:23-26) when after the eating of the Passover meal (Luke 22:15) He took of the bread which they had, blessed (Luke 22:19, 20) and broke it and gave to the disciples (Matt. 26:26-28) with the gracious words, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken and given for you: this do in remembrance of me."

Likewise also He took the cup after the eating of the Supper, gave thanks again (Mark 14:22, 23) and gave it to the disciples with the loving words, "Drink ye all of it, for this is My blood, the blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many; this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."

That the Lord instituted this sacrament with the intention that it is to be observed by His disciples in His church in all time, is plainly seen, we think, not only from the words already quoted, and repeated by the Lord—"This do in remembrance of Me," but also from the renewed command given evidently for this reason, directly to the Apostle Paul and through him to the church, in the same words; further, from the careful observance of this sacred act by the first and best Christians (Acts 2:46; 20:7); finally also from the fact that the apostles did not revoke the institution when great disorder and abuse crept in with its observance, but rather insisted on reformation and a return to its right use.

When we consider, moreover, the ends for which this sacrament was instituted, ends worthy of God and positively useful to the church, we find our esteem for the same to grow at every turn. On the part of God and Christ it serves as a means to confirm and seal unto us in the most emphatic manner the great blessings comprehended in the gospel. The great love of the Father manifested to us (John 3:14-17); Jesus Christ as crucified, the author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9), the true Bread of Life (John 6:35, 50, 51, 53-58) both all-sufficient (Heb. 10:14) as well as ready and willing to give us the life—all this is here, as it were, set before our eyes for the strengthening of our faith and hope (Gal. 3:1; John 12:32); and this the Holy Spirit confirms unto the souls that are susceptible to it.

On the side of the believer the celebration of this holy feast has likewise important ends to serve and is useful

in more ways than one. In general to bring to grateful remembrance, with deep reverence, the great work of redemption; to proclaim the Lord's death as well as the occasion (I John 4:9, 10; Rom. 5:6-8; II Cor. 8:9) and the effects (Isa. 53:5, 6; Rom. 8:1) of the same; to lay stress upon the exalted duties of the believers toward God (I Cor. 6:20; I Pet. 1:14-19) and Jesus Christ (II Cor. 5:14, 15), as well as toward one another (I John 4:11; Col. 3:13); and more of like nature. But especially according to each one's attitude and inclination, may persons who stand in the assurance of a blessed participation in Christ have fellowship and eat with joy, in love and singleness of heart; burdened ones may fall together at Jesus' feet with new confession of guilt, with humiliation and self-surrender seeking in Him righteousness and strength and looking for His grace; yea, even the most unworthy and the most timid among the people of the Lord, if they hunger indeed after the truth and His righteousness (Matt. 5:6) and desire to be wholly His, may confidently disclose this longing and this desire, and rest in the hope of His grace, remembering that He never cast out those that came to Him in humility (John 6:37) crying to Him for mercy, asking for the crumbs, and counting themselves happy if they could but touch the hem of His garment.

If the Lord's holy Supper is thus desired, and celebrated with this end in view, we believe that the true blessing as indicated—the communion with Jesus Christ and the knitting together of the believers (Matt. 26:26-28; John 6:55; I Cor. 10:16, 17), will be realized in no small measure, and be furthered thereby. But where this essential frame of mind is lacking (Matt. 22:11-13) there this fruit can not with reason be expected (II Chron. 16:9); and if the elements are taken unworthily, that is, if one does not with reverence discern the body and blood of the Lord, such a one eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself. I Cor. 11:27-29.

For this reason we may invite none to the Lord's table but such as truly believe in Jesus Christ and honestly desire to live through and for Him, those who have openly professed this before God and man, who have been baptized according to the Scriptures (I Cor. 12:13) and have been duly received into the church, who do not by their lives give just cause for offense in the church (Rom. 16:17), who live with her in peace (Matt. 5:23, 24), and as much as in them is have peace with all men (Rom. 12:18), who bear with and forgive one another (Matt. 6:14, 15; 18:23-35); in short none but disciples of Christ who have a desire and are determined solemnly to renew and confirm the covenant once entered into. Wherefore we admonish everyone to prove himself (I Cor. 11:28). Moreover we exclude no one except those who by offensive teaching or disgraceful life (II Thess. 3:14; I Cor. 5:9-13) are subject to discipline.

XXVII. Of Brotherly Care and Church Discipline.

We believe that in a Christian church every brother and every sister must share, according to ability and gifts bestowed, in a mutual care among the members, inciting one another to love and good works. Heb. 10:24. True love to one's neighbor requires this (Lev. 19:17, 18); and it is commanded by Christ our Lord (Matt. 18:15-20), and also enjoined by His apostles after Him. I Thess. 5:14, 15; Jas. 5:16-20. More especially should this be observed by those who are set as overseers (Acts 20:28; Tit. 1:7-11), whose work it is by virtue of their

office to shepherd the flock (I Pet. 5:1-4) and watch over the spiritual welfare of the church. Heb. 13:17; Ezek. 3:17; 33:2-9.

The cases that call for the notice, reproof and discipline of the church are not those shortcomings and mistakes which to a greater or less degree are common to all believers (Jas. 3:2; I John 1:8; Psa. 130:2; 143:2), but errors in teaching (Gal. 1:8; I Tim. 6:3-5; Tit. 3:10) or conduct (II Thes. 3:6; Phil. 3:18, 19) so far-reaching that those who commit the error are in apparent danger of losing their soul's inheritance (I Cor. 6:5-10) or become a cause of offense and stumbling to the church (Gal. 5:10; Rev. 2:20; I Cor. 5:6, 7; Matt. 18:7), leading souls astray (Matt. 24:10-12; II Tim. 3:13; Jude 3, 4) and causing the name of God and the church of Christ to be evil spoken of. II Pet. 2:2; Rom. 2:24; I Tim. 6:1; Tit. 2:3-5.

In dealing with offenders we distinguish the following four stages to be observed: First, when with a reasonable degree of certainty it becomes known that a brother or sister is guilty of this or that dangerous practice or clearly interdicted sin (I Cor. 5:11-13; II Pet. 2:20; Gal. 5:19-21), but the matter is not as yet generally known, the person is to be called to account in private, examined with all possible discretion, and warned in tender love (Gal. 6:1-3; Jas. 3:13-18), so that, if possible, such a one may be brought back into the right way (Jas. 5:19, 20) before the evil seed spread further. Gal. 5:9; Heb. 12:15.

If, in the second place, some one is guilty of manifest works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-7) and such fact is surely known, though the sin be committed under circumstances which seem in a degree to palliate the offense, as for instance being taken unawares or having acted hastily, such a one is to be solemnly called to account, the evil of his sin and its consequence set before him with the admonition to humble himself before God (Acts 8:22; Jas. 4:7-10; Psa. 51) and man (Matt. 5:23-26; Luke 17:1-4), according as the transgression may have been, and all possible means applied to bring about true repentance (Rev. 3:2, 3; Isa. 55:6, 7); and if necessary he should be counselled not to come to the Lord's table for a time (Jude 22, 23), until by clear proof of an amended life the offense that was given may be removed, or, in the judgment of his fellow members (II Cor. 2:6-8) it be blotted out.

The third stage is reached in the case of one who, regardless of the first and second reproof given in private, continues and grows hardened in his sin (Eph. 4:17-19; Acts 19:9; Heb. 3:13). He is to be made known to the congregation in order that the whole congregation may decide what is to be done with such a member and take such action that, being reproofed in the presence and by the judgment of all, he may be ashamed and be brought to repentance. II Thess. 3:14, 15. This properly must be accompanied with earnest prayer that, if possible, the result may be reformation and forgiveness. Jas. 5:15; I John 5:16, 17.

If, however, all this is fruitless and the reproofed one continues and hardens himself in his evil way, he must finally, by the decision of the whole congregation, be excluded from membership and denied all spiritual church-fellowship (Eph. 5:11) till he is truly converted and gives evident proof thereof. However, all must be done with due regard to position and circumstances (I Tim. 5:1, 19-21), yet without respect of person.

This ecclesiastical care and discipline we consider most necessary, not only because Jesus Christ and His

apostles enjoined it and by neglecting the same we have to fear just condemnation (I Cor. 11:30, 31), but also because it works many a benefit, namely, keeping the church free from open blemish, saving it from harmful contempt, and preventing the estrangement of weak souls or the leading astray of established hearts; yea, much more tending to deter these from evil and on the other hand to move the reproofed ones to shame and repentance.

In order, however, that this manner of treatment may have its desired effect, there must be far removed from us all inordinate desire for authority and all self-conceit of superior holiness, since in the use of these keys (Matt. 16:19) there is a power to which we resort only out of obedience (consider with what holy reserve the apostles went to work: Acts 5:1-13; 13:8-11; I Cor. 5:3-5; I Tim. 1:20), and which must be applied in deep humility (II Cor. 2:1-4) because we dare not neglect it (I Cor. 9:16-22; Ezek. 3:17-21), and in the fear of the Lord. Matt. 10:14. There is in it, therefore, also no condemning or absolving power further than as it is in perfect accord with God's judgment and His holy testimony. Prov. 17:15; II Tim. 2:2, 15, 24-26; Tit. 1:9; 2:2, 7, 8.

For this reason the separation from the persons under discipline must not proceed out of a spirit of Pharisaic holiness (I Cor. 4:7), as though we said, "Depart from me, for I am holier than thou," but out of a holy fear lest we manifest a fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11; I Cor. 6:17; I Tim. 5:22; Rev. 18:4), in accordance with the apostolic injunction to have nothing in common with such; with which there must, nevertheless, be combined a Christ-like compassion (Rom. 9:1-3) and continued admonition until one is compelled reluctantly to leave such a person to himself. Between husband and wife this separation cannot in all cases take place unless it be for adultery or fornication. Matt. 5:32; 19:9; I Cor. 7:3-5, 10, 16, 39.

In conclusion, we believe in reference to this subject, that as soon as the erring one gives conclusive evidence of sincere sorrow and amendment (Luke 17:3, 4; II Cor. 7:7, 16) he must be met with added love, encouraged, and after public and humble confession, received back into communion (Psa. 130:4; Jer. 3:1; Ezek. 33:11), with cordial love and joy (Luke 15:1-10) and full forgiveness (II Cor. 2:10), even as God also in Christ Jesus has forgiven us. Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13; Matt. 18.

XXVIII. Of the Office of Temporal Government.

We believe that although men have by nature no right to rule over one another with violence, but only in a brotherly spirit to control themselves and come to one another's assistance (Acts 17:26, 27; Matt. 7:12), nevertheless, the office of government has become necessary by reason of man's great corruptness (Gen. 6:12, 13) and that the Lord our God therefore has not only permitted but determined and ordained it (Rom. 13:1-8) first through His divine providence in general but then, too, among His people, Israel, by specific command (Deut. 16:18; Ex. 18:25; Num. 11:11, 16, 17) and that the same seems still absolutely necessary as well for the observance of right and good order in social life as for the punishment of the evil and the protection of the good, and other like objects.

For this reason we hold ourselves in duty bound towards our lawful government to regard the same as God's servant for our good, to honor it with due rever-



ence (I Pet. 2:12-21), to be obedient unto it in all things that are not in violation of God's commandments or of one's good conscience (Acts 4:19, 20), to pay cheerfully and faithfully all proper taxes and assessments, and devoutly to pray for it (I Tim. 2:1-4; Jer. 29:7), etc. All this we need to observe the more in all cases since we know that "promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south; but God is the judge: He putteth down one and lifteth up another" (Psa. 75:6, 7) according to His will (Prov. 8:15, 16), now to bless and now to chastise.

Should, however, such an office be conferred upon us, we would hesitate and would not dare to accept it, not knowing the will of Christ as to how such office should be administered. (True, there are other things, too, in civil life concerning which we have no explicit direction, but they are less difficult and can more easily be ordered according to God's Word.) No direction whatever concerning it is found among all His commandments respecting the administration of His kingdom, nor among all the instructions of his apostles. (We know nothing as to how the government is to be instituted or how the office should be administered. This gives us reason to be scrupulous). Moreover when we consider that the Lord Jesus seems everywhere to warn His disciples against bearing rule according to the manner of the world (Matt. 20:25, 26; Luke 22:25-30; John 18:36), as well as against all vengeance (Matt. 5:39, 40; Rom. 12:19), the swearing of oaths, and all worldly conformity, we consider it a very difficult matter to administer this office according to faith. We hold, too, that the power vested for a time in the Jewish government (Deut. 17:8-12; II Chron. 10:5-11) is in Christ fulfilled, brought to an end and abolished (Matt. 5:17; Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 2:15-23; 3:16-25), and hence can not be applicable to Christ's people (Heb. 7:12); on the other hand it seems to us no less calculated to arouse scruples when human laws are to be enforced which are at variance with the principles of civil law which God Himself laid down for Israel. Cases occur which often cause judges to hesitate: Compare the present laws concerning theft and adultery with Ex. 22:1; Lev. 20:10.

For these various reasons we consider ourselves fortunate to be exempt from this most important and at best dangerous service (we regard it a favor not to be called or impressed into civil office) while at the same time we can live in peace and quiet under the protection of such a benign government, who, though not recognizing for themselves the difficulties mentioned (but rather seeing in their office a divine calling) have yet granted to us such great privileges and exemptions (exemption from oaths and military service) for which we can not thank God enough (I Tim. 2:1-4) and owe our government all reverence and love.

XXIX. Of Revenge and War.

We believe we do not err when by nature we judge that avenging or retaliating of every injustice is but just. Nevertheless, it is certain that though the Lord our God permitted His people in the olden times to exercise revenge (Matt. 5:38, 43), by reason of their hardness of heart (Matt. 19:8), yet it primarily and properly belongs to God Himself (Rom. 12:17-21; Heb. 10:30; Lev. 19:17-18; Deut. 32:35) who also is alone able correctly and with exactness to judge of the measure of the evil and of the just punishment (Isa. 28:17; Jer. 17:10; Luke 12:47, 48) for which we are often incapacitated by our

imperfect knowledge, our unbridled self-love, and excited passions. Jas. 1:20; Prov. 27:4. For this reason, we believe, our Lord Jesus Christ, when He would establish His spiritual and heavenly kingdom in accord with the will of God as it was from the beginning, forbade His followers not only all practice of revenge (Matt. 5:38-44) but even all vindictiveness (I John 3:15), as did likewise His apostles after Him. Rom. 12:19; I Thess. 5:15; I Pet. 3:9. On the contrary, He insisted on their putting in practice the law of love to a degree far in advance of the teaching of nature (Luke 6:32, 33) or of the Jewish Rabbis (Matt. 5:20), as well as on an exercise of patience that should be perfect (Jas. 1:4) after His own example (II Thess. 3:5; I Peter 2:21-23); that is, instead of violently resisting the evil with the object of destroying it, rather to suffer repeated wrong (Matt. 5:38-40); rather put up with material loss and injustice than to be quick to quarrel (I Cor. 6:1-8); to render to no one evil for evil (Rom. 12:17, 20) not even reviling for reviling (I Pet. 3:9); but always to follow after that which is good toward one another and toward all; to overcome by doing good (Rom. 12:21); to manifest love even to our enemy: if he is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink (Prov. 25:21, 22; Rom. 12:20); to bless them that curse us; to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them that do violence to us and persecute us. Only as we do this shall we be children pleasing to our Father in heaven (Matt. 5:44-48), and true followers of Jesus Christ (John 12:26), who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not; but committed all to Him that judgeth righteously (I Pet. 2:21-23), in all of which He left us an example that we should follow in His steps. Phil. 2:5.

Hence it is, as we think, self-evident that the use of deadly weapons and the carrying on of warfare to the destruction of our enemies—and even of innocent ones who have not wronged us but upon whom in war often falls the burden of misery and sorrow—is entirely unseemly for a true follower of Jesus and therefore not allowed (Matt. 5:39, 40, 43, 44; II Cor. 10:3, 4). For we are persuaded that war, as we know it, cannot possibly be carried on without manifestly violating the fundamental principles of Christ's kingdom (John 18:36; Eph. 4:31, 32) and without nurturing vice and practices contrary to those principles (Gal. 5:19-21), whereby there is often manifested the likeness of wild beasts and of devils, rather than of followers of the Lamb of God (Isa. 53:7) and of those that show forth His excellencies. I Pet. 2:9.

We therefore hold that it is our duty carefully to abstain from the use of all war-like weapons and from the above mentioned hostile resistance; that it is allowed to flee from the evil as much as is in our power (Matt. 10:23), to adopt such measures against an enemy that without working to his destruction we may prevent and bring to naught his hostile purposes (Acts 23:6-9), and by means of defensive reasoning and good words (John 18:23; Acts 4:8-13, 19, 20) and manifold kindnesses to bring him to reflect and be at peace (Matt. 5:25, 26; Luke 12:58; Gen. 21:25-27. Moreover, we are of the opinion that all malevolent treatment that we experience must serve to exercise us in the faith and patience of the saints, as we follow the example of Jesus Christ, His holy apostles, and many thousands of Christians in the early and later centuries, who when for conscience sake they had to suffer adversities (Matt. 5:10) experienced in this the grace of God making all

things work for their good (Rom. 8:28; II Cor. 1:3-6; 4:17, 18; 6:10), not to mention that the merciful God often gives an issue and an escape (II Cor. 11:23-33) beyond all human thought (II Cor. 1:8-11; II Tim. 3:11; 4:17, 18). Besides all this, it was plainly prophesied that such a peaceful and non-resistant life (Matt. 10:16; Luke 10:3) would be found among the subjects of Christ's kingdom (Isa. 2:4; 11:6-8; Micah 4:1-3; Zech. 9:9, 10). Wherefore we pray that this blessed kingdom may come (Matt. 6:10) and come soon, Amen!

XXX. Of Oaths.

In the question of taking oaths we believe that though it is possible to take an oath with a devout purpose, as did the holy patriarchs at times (Gen. 14:22, 23; 21:30, 31) and as it was permitted under the Mosaic dispensation, God Himself being often represented as speaking in this human manner (Heb. 6:13-17; Psa. 89:35; 95:11; 110:4), yet such a practice is nowhere enjoined by a command of God (Ex. 20:7; Lev. 19:12) but simply defined and restrained. Ex. 22:11. Thus it is evident that swearing, like divorce and some other practices, was in reality permitted because of the want of love and of the prevailing mistrust, and the increasing degeneracy among mankind. Wherefore the Lord Jesus, in order to correct also this violation of and deviation from the original purpose of God, entirely prohibited the use of oaths in His spiritual and heavenly kingdom, when He said: "But I say unto you, Swear not at all," etc. Matt. 5:34-37.

The reason why we cannot regard these words as a prohibition simply of the frivolous and notorious habit of profane swearing, or of swearing in things of minor importance, but consider it far safer to regard them as doing away entirely with all swearing are, besides those already mentioned and others, the following: First, because the Lord Jesus is evidently not speaking against trivial swearing but refers to the legal use of the oath, as it was said to them of old time, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths" (obviously the Lord here refers to Ex. 20:7 and Lev. 19:12). Further because the Lord says,— "But I say unto you, Swear not at all—but let your speech be Yea, yea; Nay, nay, and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one." Further, because James, repeating the same words, adds: "But above all things, my brethren, swear not—neither by any other oath—that ye fall not under judgment." James 5:12. Again, because such a view does not forbid an earnest assertion of the truth of our statements, when the honor of God and the love of the truth calls for it—such as the Lord Jesus often made (John 14:12) likewise the Apostle Paul, now and then (Rom. 1:9; 9:1; II Cor. 1:23; Gal. 1:20; Phil. 1:8), since Christ does not mean to say that one shall use no words except Yea and Nay, but that our Yea shall be yea, and since we cannot regard such manner of emphasis as in reality an oath but an intense effort, proceeding from a holy motive, to awaken attention and deepen the impression; and even if in a few instances (like I Thess. 5:27) this should be found to have taken the form of an oath (which, however, is not conceded) it is well to observe that this was done by persons of unimpeachable truthfulness, and probably in the spirit of forbearance, but not to serve us as a pattern. Again, because it is far more commendable to keep our yea and nay as faithfully as though we had

sworn to it; and this confidence in one's given word is in harmony with the kingdom of Jesus. Further, because by reason of the depravity of human nature it is to be feared that the very practice of making oath is taken by godless men as a cause for attaching no weight to simple assurances and making light of lying. Rev. 21:27; 22:15. Further, because the Christians of the first centuries in general seem to have understood these words thus, and we have on record the testimonies of almost all the old teachers of the church against the use of oaths.* Finally, because a look at civil life and the requirements of a well-regulated state does not seem to reveal the need of swearing, since godless and faithless men are not to be trusted even though they swear (Jer. 5:2) and such persons have often so little fear of an oath that it is known full well beforehand and afterwards established that false oaths are sworn without number, a fact that causes godly rulers as well as true Christians in general to sigh, and which makes it necessary in spite of the use of the oath, to provide civil punishment for the untruthful.

As for ourselves, we hold that if under our solemn affirmation of the truth, which is put in place of the oath, we should deal faithlessly or fail to come up to our word, we are just as guilty and subject to just punishment as though we had sworn the heaviest oaths.

* We find in the early church widespread disapprobation of the oath based on the declaration of Jesus and of James. One of the oldest testimonies is that of Justin Martyr. In the early part of the third century Basilides dies a martyr's death for refusing to swear. Irenaeus gives a similar testimony. Basilus is very emphatic in his prohibition of the oath, but above all Chrysostom. Likewise Isidore Pelusius, also Theophylact and Euthymius, Hilarius and Hieronymus. In modern times Olshausen and Stirus.

It behooves us indeed to excel in this respect and thus to confirm our testimony with our acts, and it is therefore not to be feared that through our abstaining from the oath good order and fidelity shall suffer even in the least.

XXXI. Of Marriage.

We believe that the married state should be held in honor by all (Heb. 13:4) and that it is not only permitted but also needful (Gen. 1:28), expedient (Gen. 2:18-24; Prov. 18:22), and well pleasing to God (Matt. 19:4-6), if it is entered upon in the true spirit (Gen. 24; Prov. 19:14; 31:10-30; I Cor. 7:39) and so continued in. Eph. 5:22-33. We are assured of this through the fact of God's own appointment (Gen. 2:18-24), and the reaffirming of the same (Mark 10:3-12) and through the action of Jesus, who hallowed a marriage by His presence (John 2:1-11), as well as through the example of the most eminent saints who, living in a married state, walked with God (Gen. 5:22) and had the testimony that they pleased God (Heb. 11:5), including even the priests (Lev. 21:7-9), the high priest (Lev. 21:13-15), the prophets (e. g. David, Ezekiel, Hosea) and the apostles of the Lord (I Cor. 9:5; Matt. 8:14). It appears indeed that the teaching of the Bible holds this state to be expedient for overseers in the church (I Tim. 3:2, 12; 5:9, 10; Tit. 1:6) wherefore we are certain that the throwing of suspicion on the married state proceeds from superstition and the prohibiting of it is anti-Christian and an abomination. I Tim. 4:3.

On the general question involved the will of God concerning this state is clearly expressed, viz., that only two persons free from all others and not of too close blood relationship may enter into it, to be united and

bound together without any reserve even unto death. Matt. 19:5; Eph. 5:28. The separation of such is moreover, altogether prohibited except for the cause of fornication. Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:7-10; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11.

Further, we believe that in cases of marrying as in all things, the Lord our God directs and disposes—yet so as not thereby to annul man's freedom—be it that He in His goodness graciously brings them about (Gen. 24:14, 50; Matt. 19:6; Josh. 23:12, 13) or that He in His righteous displeasure and chastisement permits them (e. g. Judg. 14:3, 4, 14; 1 Kings 11:1-6; Ezra 9:10-15; Neh. 13:23-27.) Therefore marriage is not to be regarded as an explicit general command (Matt. 19:11, 12; 1 Cor. 7:7, 17, 27, 28) or as a universally ordained destiny, but as a thing in which man may act with freedom, so far as this is not limited by God's holy directions, and that it be in the Lord. 1 Cor. 7:39. These limitations are clearly to be seen in the prohibition of marriage with unbelieving persons (Gen. 24:14, 50; Matt. 19:6; Josh. 23:12, 13); the transgression of God's repeated command in this respect (Gen. 6:1-3; 26:34, 35; 27:46) and God's holy displeasure thereat (1 Kings 11:1-9); and in the necessity of putting away the strange wives out of Israel in order that the enkindled wrath of the Almighty might be turned from them (Ezra 9:10-15; 10:1-19; Neh. 13:23-28) as well as many occurrences showing the evil and hurtful consequences of carnal marriages in which only the natural passions are followed. Luke 17:26-28.

For this reason it is exceedingly important that a person purposing either to enter this state or to abstain from it should examine himself, consider well his qualities, in faith seek to know God's will concerning himself (1 Cor. 7:12-17), take counsel of God and His Word (Prov. 3:6; Psa. 119:9-11; Phil. 4:6, 7), and not decide upon one or the other course until in faith and with a good conscience he is convinced that in that course he will be pleasing unto the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 10:31; II Cor. 5:9, 10; Col. 3:17. Those who thus marry have good reason to hope that it is in the Lord and that His blessing will accompany it.

If matrimony is thus begun in the fear of the Lord and conducted in a Christian manner (Eph. 5:22-33) in accordance with the principles of the gospel, as laid down for the direction of both husbands and wives (1 Tim. 2:8-13; Tit. 2:3-8; 1 Pet. 3:1-7), then shall the man, who is the head of the woman, strive to be a worthy copy of Jesus Christ in His relation to His church. The wife shall be saved through the child-bearing (1 Tim. 2:15, R. V.), her seed shall be blessed (Gen. 18:18, 19; Eph. 6:4) and all things shall work together for good to them. Matt. 6:33; Rom. 8:28.

That this married life may be a happy one we consider it essential, as much as possible, to remain within one's own church communion (after the example of the patriarchs, Gen. 24:3, 4; 28:1-8; Rom. 15:5, 6; Phil. 2:1, 2) to avoid disgraceful contentions and many unpleasant consequences which are so apt to arise out of differences in the bringing up, in the manner of life, and in intellectual views (as exemplified in 1 Cor. 3:4) and which crop out when it comes to bringing up their own children as well as in other things, being often discovered too late. It is, therefore not only proper but also to their advantage for young people to counsel—next to God—with their parents and other intimate relatives, listen to their advice and not to grieve them but rather give them cause for joy. Prov. 10:1. But everything in the fear of the Lord.

XXXII. Of Death.

Of the state of the soul after this life and the necessity of a godly preparation for a blissful departure.

That it is appointed unto man once to die (Heb. 9:27; Psa. 89:48) is, we believe, a result of the transgression of our first parents (Rom. 5:12-14; Gen. 2:17; 3:19; 1 Cor. 15:21) and is thus in reality a punishment for sin. Rom. 6:23. But we also believe that through the obedience and death of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:19; Heb. 2:14, 15; Isa. 25:8) the sting of death has been removed (1 Cor. 15:55-57; Hos. 13:14) for all them that truly believe on Him (John 6:40, 50, 51, 58); so that these need not fear death (Heb. 2:14, 15; Isa. 25:8), but can thank God through Jesus Christ that it is their's sometime to die. For though our body—which, be it remembered, is of the earth (Gen. 2:7; Eccl. 12:7), polluted through sinful lusts (Rom. 7:5, 23, 24; II Cor. 7:1), and altogether unfitted for heaven without great change (1 Cor. 15:36, 50; Phil. 3:21)—continues under the necessity of a return to its first element (Rom. 8:10), and though such a thought is indeed appalling to them that live after the flesh (Rom. 8:6, 13; Luke 12:16-21) and are the servants of sin (Rom. 6:16; II Cor. 5:10; Heb. 10:31), yea, also to the godly in a certain degree after the physical nature; yet to the believer the thought of death brings true comfort (1 Thess. 4:17, 18) amid the hardships (Jas. 5:7, 8; II Cor. 4:17, 18; 5:1-9) and imperfections (1 Cor. 13:8-12; 1 John 3:2) of this earthly life, knowing that to be absent from the body and at home with the Lord, to be set free and be with Christ, is by far better (II Cor. 5:6-8; Phil. 1:20-23), and finally that the putting of the body in the earth like the grain of wheat (John 12:24) is the divinely ordained way to the reaping of better things. 1 Cor. 15:35-44.

As to the soul, the immortal nature of which has already been spoken of under Article Five, we believe that the same immediately upon its release from the body, returns to God—not to the full and final condition of glory or punishment (Matt. 25:46; Jude 6) for this will come only after the resurrection of the body and the reunion of the soul with the same, in the day of the final judgment (Matt. 25:34-46)—but to a lively anticipation of that state (Luke 16:23, 24; Rev. 6:10, 11) though in greater or less measure (Luke 12:47, 48; II Peter 2:9, 10) according to the degree of unrighteousness (Matt. 10:15; 11:22, 24) and estrangement from God (Matt. 25:30; Luke 13:24-30), or of holiness (II Tim. 2:20-22) and intimate union with Him (John 14:21-23; 15:10; 17:23, 24; 1 Cor. 15:58; II Pet. 1:8), as it evidently follows from the justice of God (Gal. 6:7, 8; II Cor. 9:6) and the nature of the case. With many their conscience bears witness to this even while they seek to deafen it, Rom. 1:21-25, how much more when it awakes. Luke 16:23; Isa. 57:21. The ungodly and unconverted sinners pass at death to a condition of imprisonment (II Pet. 2:4, 9, 17), of regret that is too late, of chagrin and pain. Isa. 66:24; Matt. 18:34; Mark 9:48. Those who die in the Lord (Rev. 14:13) pass to a condition of comfort (Luke 16:25), of peace and happiness. Luke 23:43. In this state of being, kept by the hand of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:18; 3:7), they await either in fear (Matt. 8:29; Heb. 10:27) or with desire (II Pet. 3:12-14) the last sentence or final judgment. For of a purging of the soul after death (as taught by the Roman church) we confess to know nothing, but rather that the judgment is connected with death (Heb. 9:27) and that the tree will lie as it falls. Eccl. 11:3; Luke 16:22, 23.

It is therefore of the utmost importance that we seek

to prepare for the hour of death in time (John 9:4) while it is yet today (Heb. 3:15) not only by a solemn contemplation of these things (Deut. 32:29; Psa. 39:4, 5; Psa. 90) but also by a true conversion (Acts 9:1-18; I Pet. 2:25) and a striving after faith and holiness (I Tim. 6:11; II Tim. 2:22; Heb. 12:14), to be found in Christ (Phil. 3:9-14), to have always a conscience void of offence (Acts 24:16; I John 3:20, 21), to do gladly and with our might what our hands find to do (Eccl. 9:10), and whatever there is more of like import. Phil. 4:8. All this because (being repeatedly warned of the Lord, Mark 13:37) we know not at what time or hour He will come (Matt. 24:42; 25:13; Luke 12:35-46), that we may always be ready as those that wait for their Lord that we may not be ashamed at His coming (II John 2:28) but may be found of Him in peace without spot, and blameless. II Pet. 3:14.

Seeing, moreover, that for this most necessary and most important preparation very much is required, namely, that we look forward to death in faith as to a messenger of peace (Luke 2:29, 30), regard the putting off of our body as a deliverance (II Tim. 4:6) and a redemption (Rom. 8:23) and commit our spirit with a well-founded calmness of mind unto the hands of God as our heavenly Father of Jesus Christ as our dear Redeemer (Acts 7:58), we need to this end nothing less than saving faith (John 3:14, 15; 6:40), true peace with God (Rom 5:1) a resignation to His will (Matt. 6:10; 26:39; Phil. 1:20-23), a relinquishing of all earthly things (Phil. 3:7-11; Heb. 11:13), the experience of His love (Rom. 5:5), and the comfort of the Holy Spirit (II Cor. 5:5; Rom. 8:15, 16. These all being gifts of grace bestowed on us by reason of the obedience and death of our dear Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:17; 8:37; II Cor. 5:15; II Tim. 1:10), we must seek these gifts in persevering prayer, moved throughout by a lively realization of our dependence, and then receive and acknowledge them in such measure as the Lord may impart to us, in deep humility, as His undeserved mercy. Psa. 103:10-14; 32:6, 7.

XXXIII. Of the Resurrection of the Dead.

That the great mystery (I Cor. 15:51) of the resurrection was revealed and known to the saints in the old dispensation (Dan. 12:2), though less clearly than to us (Heb. 11:13-16), we know from the words of Christ when He said, to the confusion of the Sadducees: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." Matt. 22:29, 32; Mark 12:24, 26, 27. The same is also evident from the many tokens and testimonies that they lived and died in this faith. This fundamental doctrine (Heb. 6:1, 2) has, however, been set forth in a much clearer light through the gospel (II Tim. 1:9, 10), by which we now know definitely that before the final judgment there is to be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust (Acts 24:15) so that all men that ever lived and died, whether buried on land or in the sea (John 5:28, 29; I Cor. 15:21, 22; Rev. 20:12, 13) shall awake and be made manifest. John 6:39; Ezek. 37:1-14.

As to the possibility of such an occurrence, surpassing all human thought, our faith rests not only on the above mentioned and many other clear testimonies, but on the omnipotence (Matt. 19:26; Luke 1:37; Zech. 8:6), justice and faithfulness of Him who has promised and will perform it (Heb. 10:23; Num. 23:19), namely God

the Father (Rom. 4:17; Deut. 32:39) through His Son Jesus Christ (II Cor. 4:14; John 6:40; Phil. 3:21) in the all-availing power and working of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:11), seeing that He to whom nothing is impossible, who calls into being that which is not (Rom. 4:17) should much less find it impossible to call them to whom the seed yet remaineth. I Cor. 15:35-44; John 12:14. This faith rests further on the cases of those who in times past were raised from the dead (John 11:23, 44), and especially on the resurrection of our Lord Himself (I Cor. 15:12-18), for in that He was thus declared the Son of God with power (Rom. 1:4), having power to take His life again (John 10:18) we can with confidence rely on His Word (John 6:54; 14:19) knowing that He is our Redeemer (Job. 19:25, 26) and that He as the first fruit (I Cor. 15:20-23; Rom. 11:16; Acts 26:23) and the Head of the church (Col. 1:18) not only can but without fail will fulfill all His promises. Rev. 1:18.

Concerning the way and manner, how all this shall take place, we see from the Word of the Lord, that Christ Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God (I Thess. 4:16) accompanied by the angels of His power (II Thess. 1:7; Matt. 25:31); that then all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment (John 5:29); that this shall take place with the same bodies in which they have thus lived (Isa. 26:19; Rom. 8:11) yet so changed and made incorruptible (I Cor. 15:53, 54) that they can either live forever in bliss or continue in eternal woe; that these changes shall take place instantly as in the twinkling of an eye, and yet each in this own order (I Cor. 15:23), for they that have died in Christ shall rise first and they that are yet alive and remain shall be changed likewise. I Thess. 4:16.

Finally, as regards the time of this coming of the Lord (I Thess. 3:13; Jas. 5:7, 8; II Pet. 3:12) it shall be in the last day (John 6:39, 44, 54) immediately before the last judgment, when the Lord shall come to hold judgment, the day and hour of which it is not for us to know. Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7. For though there are various prophecies and signs of the times given (Matt. 24:1-38), which we are to observe with deep reverence and which seem to indicate that the time of the end is near at hand (Dan. 12:4-9; I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 3:1-5; II Pet. 3:3-18), yet it must be preceded by the transpiring of great things—there is, nevertheless, nothing more certain than that the Lord will come in an hour when men will not be looking for Him (Matt. 24:44) and in a time when thoughtlessness and worldly-mindedness shall predominate in the world (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 18:8; I Thess. 5:2, 3; II Tim. 3:1-5), wherefore the Lord Jesus so often admonishes always to watch, as has been more fully set forth in the foregoing article.

XXXIV. Of the Final Judgment.

That in immediate connection with the aforementioned resurrection of the dead the final and general judgment will take place, we believe—first because of the idea of God's justice so deeply impressed on the conscience of all men that the consciousness of evil fills us with fear (Rom. 2:15; Gen. 42:21, 22), and, on the contrary, the

consciousness of good inspires a heartfelt confidence (I John 3:20, 21), and this in such a manner that even the most godless can scarcely and at most only for a time deaden the impression (Isa. 57:20, 21; Rom. 6:13-17); secondly, because we do not always see justice carried out in this life (Psa. 73) and are thus led to look for it in the hereafter (Eccl. 8:11-13; II Cor. 5:10), since the above-mentioned idea can in no wise be denied or gotten rid of (Rom. 1:19; 2:15), for which reasons all intelligent peoples in all ages, even though being without special divine revelation, have believed in a coming judgment. Our belief in this rests still much more on the explicit statements found in the Scriptures of the Old Testament (Eccl. 12:14; 11:9; Dan. 7:9, 10; 12:1-3; Mal. 4:1) and more especially in those of the New.

The one who is to hold this great judgment is God, the Father (Acts 17:31; Rom. 3:6) the Judge of all (Heb. 12:23); yet it will be through Jesus Christ, His Son (Acts 10:42) to whom He has committed all judgment (John 5:22, 27) because of His willing humiliation and His obedience even unto death (Phil. 2:6-11) by which He, as mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 12:24), has obtained the right (Psa. 2:8-12) to rule over all. Psa. 72:8; John 5:27. Wherefore He will show His kingly power not only to His friends (Matt. 25:34; 28:18-20) but also to His foes (Luke 19:27; Rev. 1:7) as it is written,—“That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” Phil. 2:10, 11.

Those who shall be judged are all nations as whole (Matt. 25:31, 32) and every individual person in particular, be he great or small (Rev. 20:12, 13) rich or poor as well as the humblest beggar, yea also the fallen angels. Matt. 25:41; II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 20:10.

The manner of the appearing of the great Judge, Jesus Christ, at His coming in judgment will be in the highest degree terrible, and the bringing of all nations before His judgment seat, without any escape (Matt. 24:29, 30); for the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven (I Thess. 4:16) with the clouds of heaven (Rev. 1:7; Dan. 7:13, 14), with great power and glory (Luke 9:26; 21:25-27), with ten thousands of His saints (Jude 14, 15), and all the holy angels with Him, amid accompanying circumstances so mighty that all nature will be moved and amazed. II Pet. 3:10. When He shall thus sit upon the throne of His glory before the eyes of all, even of His bitterest enemies, then shall the angels of His power (Matt. 13:41-44; II Thess. 1:7) gather before His judgment seat all nations to give account (Rom. 14:12; Matt. 25) of the time (Rev. 3:3; Luke 19:44), the means (Luke 16:2; Matt. 11:20-24; Heb. 2:1-4) and the gifts which they have received. Luke 12:47, 48.

Moreover, the things concerning which account shall be required are not only a few of the most prominent actions of men, but every one of them in particular, subjective as well as objective (Heb. 4:12, 13), not only words (Matt. 12:36, 37; Jude 15) and deeds (Rom. 2:6; Rev. 2:23) but even the hidden thoughts (I Cor. 4:5) and inclinations of the heart. Rom. 2:16.

The standard of judgment will be perfect righteousness itself (Isa. 28:17; Psa. 9:8; 96:10; 98:9) which belongs to this great Judge as an essential quality (Psa. 45:7, 8; Heb. 1:8, 9) by which He is always known. Gen. 18:25. And His judgment is unerring (Psa. 139:1-13; Isa. 29:15, 16), since He is the omniscient one (John 2:25; Heb. 4:13) the searcher of all hearts (Acts 1:24) before

whom no manner of false plea or any pretence can in the least avail. Matt. 7:22, 23. Moreover, He will judge with exactness (Dan. 5:27; Prov. 24:12) according to that which is written in the books of His omniscience (Mal. 3:16), of conscience (Rom. 2:15), and of divine revelation (John 12:48; 5:45), in each case according to the circumstances under which the person has lived (Rom. 2:12) and after the measure of gifts he received and the means and opportunities he had of obtaining the same (Matt. 13:16, 17) as well as the use or abuse or total neglect of them. I Cor. 3:10-15.

All this shall proceed on the basis of the covenant of grace (John 3:14-18; 5:24) by virtue of which they who sincerely believe (Rom. 8:1) who earnestly strive after that which is good (I Cor. 9:24-27; Phil. 3:7-14; Heb. 12:14) and do the same (I John 2:4, 29; 3:4-10) even though in weakness (Psa. 103:10-14; I John 1:6-10) and amid much stumbling (Jas. 3:2; Psa. 37:24), will obtain mercy for Christ's sake (Jude 21; Rom. 6:23); those however who continue in unbelief and obey not the truth but obey unrighteousness, unto them shall be wrath and indignation. Rom. 2:4-8.

As to the award of this righteous judgment we see that Jesus Christ the great Judge shall bring together as His chosen ones those who shall be found to be His sheep (John 10:27, 28), who have done good and have been faithful in a very little (Luke 16:10; 19:17), and shall set them on His right hand receiving them with this most gracious greeting: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” But those who have done evil and not good (whose names are not found in the book of life, Rev. 3:5, 20:15; 21:27), set on His left hand as the servants of unrighteousness, He shall banish from

His presence with these most terrible words: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

The time when this final judgment shall take place the Father has put in His own power (Mark 13:32-37; Acts 1:7) but upon us He enjoins a life of pious preparation and watchfulness in the fear of God. Luke 21:34-36.

XXXV. Of Eternal Life.

The kingdom which the blessed shall inherit in the day of the final judgment (Matt. 25:34) we understand (I John 3:2) to be in general a condition of joy (Matt. 25:21; Psa. 16:11; Isa. 51:11) and glory (I Pet. 1:4) far exceeding our conceptions in this life of humble limitations. I Tim. 6:16. For this reason the Holy Spirit, in order to help our infirmity, speaks of it throughout figuratively, in terms of such things as in this life are esteemed the most agreeable and delightful. Matt. 8:11; 22:2; Heb. 11:10; Rev. 19:7; chaps. 21 and 22.

To speak of it more in particular, we believe that it will consist in a life of eternal and heavenly bliss (Luke 15:7; Rev. 19:7), imperishable and unfading, which will be enjoyed under conditions of perfect delight and satisfaction in soul and body, spoken of as a fullness of joy in God's presence and pleasures at His right hand forevermore.

The body will be freed from all its present imperfections and infirmities, altogether changed (Phil. 3:21), spiritual, heavenly (I Cor. 15:40-44, 49, 50), shining glory (Matt. 13:43), fashioned like unto the glorified body of Jesus Christ in heaven.

In no less degree will the soul be set free from all that is yet painful and grievous (Rev. 7:16; 21:4) and

on the contrary will be clothed with all the perfection of which it is capable, both in knowledge (I Cor. 13:9-13) and in glory (II Thess. 2:14; I Pet. 5:10; Rev. 21:27), perfectly at one with God, and thus transformed into that image of glory (II Cor. 3:18) toward which the upward progress in this life is but as the beginning, though its consummation be sought with longing desire. II Cor. 5:1, 2; Rom. 8:23.

The place of this blissful state is heaven, where God dwells (Isa. 57:15; John 14:2), a city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God, of which the greatest glory on earth is but a shadow.

Though there will be degrees of glory (I Cor. 3:8), some shining as the sun (Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43) others as the stars, even as also one star differeth from another in glory, according as they suffered much and contended rightly (II Tim. 2:5-12; I Cor. 15:58; Rev. 3:4, 5) or have excelled in holiness and zeal (II John 8; Rev. 2:17; 3:12), yet each one according to his capability will be filled and satisfied.

The company of the blessed will be extremely delightful. First there will be the perfectly blessed and all-sufficient God (Matt. 5:8; I John 3:2; Rev. 21:3), and Jesus Christ as the Lamb that was slain (Rev. 5:6; John 12:26; 14:3; 17:19-24), then the holy angels of God (Rev. 7:11; Heb. 12:22-24) together with all just men made perfect from Eden to the end of the world. Luke 13:28-30. Among all these there will not be found the least contention or disagreement, but on the contrary, the fullest accord (Rev. 5:8-14; 7:9-12) and the most passionate love. I John 4:7-21. In all probability they will know each other (Matt. 17:3; Luke 16:19-31) and also communicate to one another their knowledge, their experiences and their enjoyments, all of which will be the source of unspeakable joy. Psalms 79:13.

The blessed will be occupied largely in beholding unveiled all the perfections of God (Psalms 63:3-6; Exodus 34:5-8) and Jesus Christ as the mediator between God and man, and all the divine providences and works both in nature and in grace, especially the work of redemption (Rev. 1:5) as well as that of conversion and sanctification (Col. 1:12), etc. Thus beholding all the wonderful things in God, in His saints, and especially in one's own self (Rev. 15:34; II Thess. 1:10; Tit. 3:3-7; Eph. 2:3-10) under the unbroken influence of the Spirit of glory, the overshadowing of the Almighty, and the guidance of the Lamb in the midst of the throne, both body and soul will be continually refreshed, and be absorbed in the delight of united and responsive praise, worship and glorifying (Rev. 7:10-12) in all eternity.

XXXVI. Of Eternal Punishment.

Respecting the condition of those who in the final judgment will be condemned, we believe that it will be unhappy and terrible beyond all conception (Dan. 12:2), because the Holy Spirit represents it throughout in terms of all that is dreadful and insufferable (Heb. 12:29; Isa. 33:14), speaking of it now as hell (Matt. 10:28; 18:9; II Pet. 2:4) or the valley of the children of Hinnom where the idolatrous Israelites formerly cast their children as an offering into the glowing arms of Moloch to be burned with fire; then as a furnace of fire (Matt. 13:50), a pit burning with fire and brimstone (Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8) an outer darkness (Matt. 25:30), the gnawing of a worm that dieth not (Mark 9:43-48) and fire that is not quenched (Matt. 3:12), and more

of like import (Matt. 18:34). From all these dreadful representations we have every reason to assume that that condition will be one of utter perdition from God (II Thess. 1:9; Matt. 7:23; Luke 13:27, 28), from all good, all comfort (Luke 16:24, 25), and all salvation, as also a realization of the insufferable wrath of almighty God (Rev. 6:16, 17) and His avenging justice (II Thess. 1:8; Heb. 10:30, 31), both as to soul and body, without any hope of escape or relief in all eternity. Matt. 25:46.

In their bodies, as we can conceive of it, the condemned will be standing without (Luke 13:25) when the blessed have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air (I Thess. 4:17) when all the doors of hope and of escape both on earth and in heaven shall be shut (Matt. 25:10), when all the elements, kindled with fire, will be burned up (II Pet. 3:10-12), the bottomless abyss opening to engulf alive these unhappy ones as were in their time Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16:32, 33) and the Sodomites, they being thus consumed with the earth and all that is upon it that they loved (II Tim. 3:2-4; Psalms 17:14; Luke 17:26-30; I John 2:15-17; II Pet. 3:7), yet their changed bodies being indestructible, they are not annihilated (Rev. 9:6) but will suffer the fire of eternal punishment.

Regarding the soul, they will not only, as said above, be separated by a great gulf from God and the blessed and from every sort of comfort, but will, moreover, be most painfully tormented, by the undying recollection of so many proffered means of grace (Matt. 21:20-24) opportunities (Matt. 11:28; 23:37; Isa. 55), and convincing appeals to God's goodness (Acts 14:17; Rom. 1:16-25; 2:1-24; Rev. 3:20), and the wilful neglect and refusal of the same (Matt. 22:5; Heb. 2:3; 10:29; Acts 13:40-46) as well as all manner of unrighteous deeds. This consciousness with the consequent belated repentance, chagrin, and despair (Gen. 4:13, 14; Matt. 27:3-5), will cause a torment far exceeding all our present conception.

All this will be aggravated by the exceeding terrible-ness of the company of the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41) together with all wicked sinners (Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-6; Jude 14-16; Rev. 22:15) and by the sound of their blasphemies against God and all that is good. Rev. 16:9, 11, 21. Moreover, that which makes this unhappy condition most desperately terrible is the fact that the Holy Scriptures do not give the least ground to expect a release from the same, but on the contrary they call it an eternal punishment, an everlasting fire, and unquenchable fire, a worm that dieth not, etc.

However, it is certain that there will be degrees in these punishments (Luke 12:47, 48) so that it will be more tolerable for them of Tyre and Sidon, and of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for such places and persons among whom the Lord has manifested Himself with especial means of knowledge and convicting power (Matt. 12:41, 42), such distinction being indeed a necessary part of the exercise of the most perfect justice, which will be manifested in this as in all other works of God. Gal. 6:7, 8.

May He give us grace, that in the right way we may flee from this wrath to come! Amen.

GC THE COMMON CONFSSION 1896
(as printed in the
1959/1968/1984 Constitutions)

The General Conference believes in the divine inspiration and the infallibility of the Bible as the Word of God and the only trustworthy guide of faith and life; and in Jesus Christ as the only Savior and Lord. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11).

In the matter of faith it is, therefore, required of the congregations which unite with the Conference that, accepting the above confession, they hold fast to the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5), baptism on confession of faith (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), the avoidance of oaths (Matt. 5:34-37; James 5:12), the biblical doctrine of nonresistance (Matt. 5:39-48; Rom. 12:9-21), non-conformity to the world (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:22-24), and the practice of a scriptural church discipline (Matt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1).

ARTICLES OF FAITH

1933

I. God.

We believe in a triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is the only God, infinite, incomprehensible, self-existent from eternity, unchangeable, omnipresent, all-sufficient and wholly perfect. In His essence He is Spirit, Life, Love, and Light. In His attributes He is holy, righteous, omnipotent, omniscient, all-wise, merciful, gracious, long-suffering, of absolute goodness and truth. He is the creator, ruler, and preserver of all things, and is worthy to be revered, loved, and glorified by all His creatures.

Deut. 6:4, Matt. 3:16-17, I Kings 8:27, Gen. 1:1, 17:1, Isa. 40:22-26, 11:5, Rom. 1:19, 20, John 4:24, I John 3:20, 4:8, Ex. 34:6-7, Ps. 139:7-12, James 1:17, Eph. 4:24, James 5:11, Rev. 7:11-12.

The Father is the first person in the God-head, and is revealed to us in the Scriptures as the author of life and the source of all things through the Word. He is the father of Jesus Christ, His only begotten, eternal, uncreated Son.

Rom. 15:6, John 5:26, 1:14, Ps. 2:7, I Cor. 6:6, John 1:11, 12: 1:3, I John 5:20, Micha 5:2.

The Son is the second person in the God-head, being the Father's eternal Wisdom and Word through whom all things are, and who was made flesh,* being the very image of His person and the brightness of His glory.

John 1:1-4, Hebr. 1:3.

The Son is the fullest expression of God's thought to the world in His threefold office of prophet, priest, and king.

I Tim. 6:13, Hebr. 7:17.

The Holy Spirit is the third person in the God-head, proceeding from both the Father and the Son. His office is to convict the sinner, regenerate him, and dwell within the believer, sanctifying him, filling him with peace, joy, and power for service, and victory over sin, leading him in all truth as the true vicar of Christ during His absence in person, sealing the believer unto the day of the consummation of the redemption at Christ's return. He is also an intercessor for the believer.

John 15:26, John 16:13, John 3:3-5, John 14:16, Rom. 14:17, Ephes. 1:13-14, Rom. 8:26.

As a summary of our belief in the triune God we accept the "Apostolic Creed" in full, in which the whole Christian church is united.

*This incarnation is of profound significance: It made possible not only the supreme revelation of God's infinite love, but also His death for the redemption from sin. The denial of this "coming in the flesh" (not "of the flesh", which denotes ordinary birth) is an outstanding mark of the anti-christian spirit.

I Tim. 3:16, Hebr. 10:5-10, I John 4:3.

II. God's Word.

We believe that the Old and New Testament, called the Bible, or Sacred Scriptures, is God's word, and although written by men, was inbreathed by the Holy Spirit, and is therefore the infallible record of God's dealing with His creation, partic-

ularly with man, and of man's reaction to it. It is the special revelation of God's will and plan of redemption, and of the rule of life for man.*

II Pet. 1:20, 21, John 10:35.

*It is different from all other books, being in a class by itself. All other books, insofar as they might come in conflict with the Scriptures, are to be tested by this standard of truth, which cannot be broken. The fulfillment of many prophecies bears witness to the trust-worthiness of the Scriptures, as does also the best scholarship. We believe that the prophecies that are yet unfulfilled, will be fulfilled when their time comes.

Luke 24:44-47, II Tim. 3:16, Malth. 5:17-19, John 10:35, Hab. 2:3.

III. Creation.

We believe that the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit created the universe, the heavens and the earth with all that is therein, and that He continues to have immediate command over it. The visible things were created from that which does not appear. Everything that has life was created after its kind.

Gen. 1:1-27, John 1:3, Ps. 33:6.

As an intelligent and moral being God desired fellowship of such beings, and therefore created man in His own image and to His glory, using the dust of the ground to form his body, and His own breath of life to endow him with a soul. We believe that this crown of creation was physically, mentally, and spiritually perfect, having a free will and a pure spirit from the beginning, able to acquire dominion over the earth and to glorify his Creator in all his doings. We also believe as the Scriptures indicate and science after many years of searching has failed to disprove that man was not evolved from a lower animal.**

Gen. 1:26, 27; Gen. 2:7; 5:1, Hebr. 11:3, Prov. 8:31, I Cor. 15:39

**In His wisdom and power God rules the universe, making all things serve together for good to them that love Him. Not even a sparrow, or a hair falls to the ground without His will. But we must distinguish between what He wills in an absolute sense, and what He permits and overrules according to circumstances and the nature of things, giving sufficient room for man's free will to safeguard his personality as a moral being, and for God's foreknowledge.

Rom. 8:28, Malth. 10:29, Matth. 23:27, Job 1:12, Acts 15:16.

IV. Fall and Degeneration of Man.

We believe that our first parents Adam and Eve did not remain in their original state of innocence and happiness, in which they enjoyed intimate communion with God. Through the subtlety of Satan man was induced to doubt and disobey God, and to believe the tempter, and to eat of the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge, which was set before them to test their faith and free will obedience.† (see next page)

Gen. 2:17, Gen. 3:1-6, II Cor. 11:3, John 8:44, Gen. 3:6, 16:19

We believe that the whole perspective of man and all creation, of history in nations and nature, of ethical and physical evils is absolutely connected with this fall, and that Satan is the author of all of degeneration.

John 8:44, Rom. 8:19-23.

†The consequences of this transgression are: Loss of peace and happiness, estrangement from God, mental and physical suffering, corruption of the whole nature, which is continually inclined toward evil, and a degeneration coursing into death as the wages of sin. This death passed upon Adam and all his posterity as a separation from God spiritually, resulting in a separation of the spirit from the body, and eternal separation of man from God, unless man is reconciled to God through Christ.

Gen. 3:10; 6:5, Rom. 3:10, 19, Gen. 2:17; 5:12, Rom. 8:21-23; 6:23, Ps. 59:2, Rev. 21:8

V. Man's Redemption and Regeneration.

1. THE MEDIATOR—We believe that the work of regeneration or redemption was and is wrought in the person, words, and work of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the only mediator between God and man.

1 John 4:9, 1 Tim. 2:5, 6, John 3:16, 1 John 4:9, 10

2. THE SPRING—We believe the source of the cure for sin in man and creation is found in God's

Rom. 5:8, 1 Tim. 2:3, 4, Gal. 1:3, 4.

3. THE PREPARATION—We believe that God first revealed His plan of redemption to Adam and Eve as He pronounced the doom upon Satan love and God's will and God's holiness and justice, through the seed of the woman, and promised to Abraham that in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed. He gave the law to Israel to teach man the knowledge of sin, and train him in righteousness until Christ should come. Through the types, symbols, ceremonies and prophecies in the Old Testament He kept this hope of redemption alive.

Rom. 1:17, 16, Rom. 3:23-26, Gen. 3:15, Gen. 12:3, Ex. 20:3-17, Rom. 3:20, Gal. 3:24, Gal. 4:4.

4. THE MANIFESTATION—We believe that for our redemption from sin and death, God in the fullness of time gave His Son Jesus Christ, who was made flesh, and assumed the form of a servant, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death. Because man had transgressed God's law and was under sentence of death, Christ was put under the law to free us from it by fulfilling its requirements, and becoming our substitute. Having lost our righteousness by the Fall, He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God by Him. Eternal life having been forfeited, Christ made the restoration of it possible by tasting death on the accursed tree, thus ransoming us by His precious blood. The penitent believer's standing before God as a just soul being thus restored, Christ rose again, thereby sealing our justification. He ascended to the right hand of the Father as our merciful and faithful High Priest to atone for our sins, and as our advocate to intercede for us, and remove our sins from us as far as the East is

from the West. We also believe, according to the Scripture, in a future consummation or completion of this work of redemption or regeneration, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

John 1:14, Phil. 2:7, Hebr. 2:14-16, Gen. 2:17, Gal. 4:4, 5, Heb. 9:15, Isa. 53:4-6, Gal. 3:13, 11 Cor. 5:21, 1 Pet. 1:18-19, Hebr. 2:9, Rom. 4:25, Hebr. 2:9, Rom. 4:25, Hebr. 10:12, 1 John 2:2, Ps. 103:12, Acts 3:20, 21, Rom. 6:17-23, 1 Cor. 5:24-26; 54-57, Rev. 21:1-4.

5. CONDITIONS—We believe that Christ's redemptive work is applied to the sinner by the Holy Spirit through: grace, faith, repentance, conversion, regeneration, justification, and sanctification.*

Eph. 2:4-9.

*a. GRACE—Grace is the merciful attitude of God toward the sinner who has no claims to make and no promise to plead, and who is entirely unable to earn his salvation by works, but must receive it as the gift of God. This grace is extended toward all without respect of person, but subject to our choice and will.

Rom. 6:23, 11 Pet. 3:9, John 1:12.

b. FAITH—It is the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, by which we accept Him as our personal Savior, and receive the right and power to become the children of God, and obtain peace and joy, and are fruitful in good works, and live a victorious life.

Rom. 5:1, 1 Pet. 1:8, Gal. 5:22, 1 John 5:4.

c. REPENTANCE—This is a godly sorrow for sin and offences of which we have been convicted by God's Word, His goodness, or His chastening rod, so that we are willing to confess them and forsake them, and do God's will. This secures pardon and forgiveness because our sins have been atoned for, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit becomes possible.

11 Cor. 7:10, 1 John 1:9, Ps. 32:1, 5, Isa. 43:25, Acts 2:38.

d. CONVERSION—This is a change of mind and attitude toward God, and causes the soul to turn from sin unto Christ. When a soul turns to God with an honest purpose, then the Holy Spirit does His part in:

Rom. 12:2, Ps. 51:13.

e. REGENERATION—This is by the Word of God the new birth, the imparting of the divine nature, a new creature in Christ, receiving eternal life by faith, and the restoration of the image of God. The evidences of this new life are: supreme love to God, love for the brethren and love for our enemies. This constrains us to be obedient to Christ, whereby we know that we know Him, and that His Spirit is in us, and we produce the fruits of the Spirit.

1 Pet. 1:23, John 3:3-7, 11 Pet. 1:3, 4, 11 Cor. 5:17, Eph. 4:24, 1 John 3:14, Gal. 5:22.

f. JUSTIFICATION—We believe and confess that man has no righteousness of his own, but only the righteousness of Christ which, of his free grace, without any merits on man's part, is imputed to man's account by faith, and imparted to the penitent sinner through the Holy Ghost in regeneration, and changes his position before God from guilt and condemnation to acquittal and acceptance when God sees the penitent believer in Christ.

Matt. 5:44-47, John 14:15, 1 John 2:3, 1 John 3:24, Gal. 5:22, Rom. 3:10, Rom. 4:5, 6, Rom. 5:17-21, Gal. 2:16, Tit. 3:5, Rom. 8:1.

g. SANCTIFICATION—We believe that we can only then have fellowship with a holy God when we are holy in character, freed from the dominion of sin and perfect in Christ, pursuing a life of holiness. This condition is wrought by God through the Holy Spirit, and the daily cleansing by the Word, and only completed at the coming of the Lord.

11 Cor. 5:15, 1 Pet. 1:15, 16, 1 Thess. 4:3, Col. 1:28, Heb. 12:14, 1 Thess. 5:23, 1 Pet. 1:2, Eph. 5:26.

VI. The Church (Greek "ekklesia"—called out).

We believe that the church is the body of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, called saints, that

have been called out of the world by a living faith in a crucified, risen, ascended, and returning Christ, who have been partakers of His divine nature, are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and in living union with Him and with each other. Christ is the head of the church which is the new man in Christ, having been baptized on Pentecost by the Holy Spirit into one body in Christ, including believers of both, Jews and Gentiles.

I Cor. 1:2, John 17:16, John 5:24, Gal. 6:14, I Cor. 15:20, Luke 24:51, Acts 1:11, John 14:17, John 15:4, 7, I John 1:7, Eph. 5:23, Eph. 1:22, Acts 1:5, I Cor. 12:13, Eph. 3:6.

MEMBERSHIP—Only such can be members of the church who have been baptized upon their confession of repentance and faith in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 2:38, II Cor. 5:17, Rom. 10:9, 10, Acts 2:38-41.

***CHARACTER**—We believe that according to the Scripture, the character of the church should be holy, not conformed to the world and the spirit of the age, but bound together by the bond of love, therefore, in fellowship with each other, and united in faith and spirit, entirely consecrated to her calling, and possessed of a spirit of absolute equality among her members.

Eph. 5:26, 27, Rom. 12:2, John 13:34, 35, Acts 2:44, Eph. 4:3-6, 13, Rom. 12:1, Col. 3:11.

FIGURES of the Church—1. As Christ's body. The Bible teaches that the true church is the body of Christ, and, therefore, a living organism, and vitally related to Christ as the head, and having the same life, consequently, the members are vitally related to each other. 2. Branches on the vine which is Christ. 3. The Bride of Christ. 4. God's dwelling place. The habitation of God through the Spirit.

Col. 1:18, Rom. 12:4, 5, I Cor. 12:12-27, II Cor. 11:2, John 15:1, Eph. 5:31, 32, Eph. 2:19-22.

PURPOSE—The mission of the church is to witness for Christ, and bring the Gospel to all mankind, and be a spiritual power in the world. It is her duty to complete herself, and show forth the riches of God's grace. This is effected through the ministry of the Word and the fostering of the Christian life.

Acts 1:8, Matt. 28:19, 20, Eph. 4:11-16, Eph. 2:7, Eph. 5:18, 19, Heb. 10:25.

THE MINISTRY.—To accomplish this purpose with the church, God has appointed the office of the ministry in its diversified duties and departments. It is enjoined upon the church to look for men with proper qualifications. These qualifications and their duties, as well as the duties of the church toward them, are outlined in the Scripture passages connected herewith.

Acts 20:28, Eph. 4:11, Tit. 1:5, I Tim. 3:2-7, Tit. 1:5-9, I Pet. 5:1-3, Heb. 13:17.

VII. The Ordinances:

BAPTISM—Christ has commanded that all who believe in Him and His shed blood and have become children of God, should be baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; not as in itself a means of salvation, but as the outward sign of their covenant with God, and their

baptism by the Holy Spirit, by which they were incorporated into the body of Christ (the church).

Matt. 28:19, 20, I Pet. 3:21, I Cor. 12:13.

The conditions for baptism are: previous instruction, faith, repentance and a new life. These conditions make it impossible for infants to be fit subjects for baptism, since in every New Testament record of baptismal services, faith was present, and required. But we believe in the consecration of children.

Matt. 28:19, 20, Mark 16:16, Acts 8:36, 37, Acts 2:38, Acts 8:12, 13, Acts 8:36-39, Acts 16:14, 15, Acts 16:31, 32, I Sam. 1:24-28.

COMMUNION (THE LORD'S SUPPER)—

In the night in which Christ was betrayed He instituted the Holy Communion with bread and wine. The former, the emblem of His broken body, the latter the emblem of His shed blood, and He commanded that this ordinance should be observed.

Matt. 26:26-28, I Cor. 10:16, Acts 2:46, I Cor. 11:24-26.

The purpose of communion as taught in the Word of God, is a memorial of Christ's suffering and death till He comes, and a token of communion with Christ, and with each other, in unity of faith and spirit. It is to be partaken of with gratitude, and faith, and after a thorough self-examination.

John 6:29, Heb. 11:6, I Cor. 11:28, Luke 22:19, 20.

VIII. The Family

The family is the first institution ordained of God in the garden of Eden, and confirmed by Christ, and must be regarded and honored as the holiest temporal relation between two persons on earth, because it is typical of the believer's relation to Christ. This union must, therefore, properly originate with God who really joins them together, for marriages are to be "in the Lord". We believe, therefore, that only such that are free from all others, and not too close in blood relationship, and fundamentally of the same faith, should be united in the holy bonds of matrimony. Such a union is to be for life, and divorces are unscriptural.

Gen. 2:18-24, Matt. 19:4-6, Eph. 5:22-32, Matt. 19:6, Matt. 5:32, Matt. 19:8, 9, I Cor. 7:10, 11.

If children are born into the family it is the duty of parents to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and the children are to obey their parents in the Lord.

Eph. 6:1-4.

IX. The Relation of the Church and the Individual to the Government

We believe that the office of the worldly government is a necessity and ordained of God. But Church and State, the one a heavenly and the other an earthly institution, are to be organically separate from each other. They are not built on the same foundation, and their principles are often in direct conflict with each other, and Christ's followers are warned against bearing rule according to the manner of the world. It appears, therefore, that the be-

liever's relation to the government should be guided by strict adherence to the plain teachings of the Scriptures wherever there is a conflict of duties. The Bible teaches that it is the duty of those enjoying the blessings of, and protection by the government, to pay their tribute, honor and obey those to whom it belongs, in so far as it does no violence to their conscience, and to pray for those in authority.

Rom. 13:1, Matt. 16:16-18, Matt. 5:43-48, Rom. 12:17-21, Rom. 13:1-6, Mark 10:42-43, Acts 5:29, Matt. 5:33-37, James 5:12, Matt. 22:21, Rom. 13:6, Rom. 13:6, 7, 1 Pet. 2:13-15, Acts 5:29, 1 Tim. 2:1, 2.

X. Swearing of Oaths

The Oath, though devoutly performed by the patriarchs, even spoken by God Himself, according to the Scriptures and history, seems not to have been in the original divine plan, but adopted by, and deeply rooted into the heart of man because of man's inclination to misrepresent a matter and deviate from the truth, and only permitted by God like the divorce, because of the hardness of their heart.

Gen. 24:2-9, Heb. 6:13-17.

We, therefore, believe that a Christian should abstain from any and all forms of oath as well as profanity and idle words, and a false affirmation which is justly regarded as perjury. The oath establishes a low standard of truthfulness, and is an insult to a Christian who is supposed to speak the truth always, and who is forbidden to take the name of God in vain.

Matt. 12:36, Ex. 20:7.

Besides, the law does not require the oath of us. Those of us who have an office that ordinarily requires the administration of an oath to others, should serve only as a witness instead, and not as a partaker in swearing.*

XI. Non-Conformity to the World.

The Scripture and experience have taught us that man's nature is prone to conform to the spirit of the age, and God's Word warns believers against

*An oath is a religious act, an appeal to God by holding up the hand, or imploring His wrath upon the defaulter by kissing the Bible or laying the hand upon it, and taking God into partnership without His consent, and without any power on the human side to fulfill its obligation. It was inflicted upon Christ by force so as to compel Him to speak, or in case of silence to judge Him guilty of perjury. Therefore, Christ, in order to correct this violation of, and deviation from God's original purpose, entirely prohibits the use of the oath, and the Apostle James covers all the avenues of the subject by saying: "Swear not at all", which indicates that believers are not permitted to go beyond the "Yea and nay" in their affirmation of the truth. The expressions by Christ in John 14:12; and by Paul in Romans 1:9; II Cor. 1:23; and Gal. 1:20; were required by the Jewish custom of establishing a word in the mouth of two or three witnesses.

Gen. 14:22-23, Jer. 34:18-20, Matt. 5:34-36, Matt. 26:63, Matt. 5:33-37, James 5:12.

loving the world, because they are not of it. It declares that the believer's friendship to the world is at the expense of the friendship of God, and that they shall be a separate people not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, and keep themselves unspotted from the world, and do all to the glory of God.

1 John 2:15-17, John 17:16, James 4:4, II Cor. 6:17, James 1:27, I Cor. 10:13.

We, therefore, believe that this principle should control the believer's conduct in regard to amusements, business methods, bodily adornment, his affiliation with organizations which are hindering his spiritual growth, and oath-bound secret organizations, which under the guise of religion are antagonistic to Christ and the best interests of the church.

Ps. 37:4, Eph. 2:2, 1 Tim. 2:8-10, 1 Pet. 3:3, 4, Ezek. 8:7-16, Eph. 5:11-14.

XII. Nonresistance.

Since the Word of God teaches that all strife and contention and wars originate in carnal lusts, against which the Spirit strives, because the flesh is contrary to the Spirit, Therefore,

James 4:1, Gal. 5:17.

We believe, according to the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, and the example of our Lord and Master and the first Christians, that believers cannot take part in any carnal strife or warfare, either domestic, religious, or civil, between individuals, factions or nations, because:

1. Of the believer's nature and relation to Christ.
2. Of what the Bible teaches of the believer's attitude toward his fellowmen.
3. Of what the Bible teaches concerning warfare.**

**1. Of the believer's nature and relation to Christ, he is a new creature in Christ Jesus, a partaker of the divine nature, and has the mind of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ, and through the Holy Ghost he produces the fruit of the Spirit. Therefore, as a follower of Christ he shall suffer patiently, even praying for his tormentors.

11 Cor. 5:17, 11 Pet. 1:4, Phil. 2:5, Rom. 8:9, Gal. 5:22, 1 Pet. 2:21-23, Luke 23:34.

2. Of what the Bible teaches of the believer's attitude toward his fellowmen. The followers of Christ shall not resist the evil done to them. The spirit of retaliation was very emphatically rebuked by the Lord. The believer is admonished to have peace with all men, to love his enemies and pray for them. Hatred, the necessary element in war and strife is condemned, and he is to overcome evil with good.

Matt. 5:39, Luke 9:54-56, Rom. 12:18, Matt. 5:44-48, 1 John 3:15, Rom. 12:20-21.

3. Of what the Bible teaches concerning warfare. Christ orders Peter to sheath the sword or perish by it. The disciples of Christ must not fight with carnal weapons, because his kingdom is not of this world. The weapons of the believer's warfare are spiritual, and vengeance belongeth to God only. David is rebuked and not permitted to build the house of God because he shed much blood.

Matt. 26:52, John 18:36, 11 Cor. 10:4, Rom. 12:19, Ex. 20:13, 1 Chron. 22:8.

4. Believers must be true to their God when conflicting demands are made upon them.

We believe that a Christian's duty is to be subject to the higher powers, but when demands are made contrary to our convictions from the Word of God, e. g. military service, we are governed by the word of the apostles: "We ought to obey God rather than man."

Rom. 13:1-2, Acts 5:29.

XIII. Death, Resurrection and Judgment

DEATH—We believe that as descendants of the first Adam, our bodies are of the earth, earthy, composed of flesh and blood which cannot inherit the kingdom of Heaven, and through the fall of the first Adam, was polluted by sin, the wages of which is death. And death has passed through all, therefore all have to die except those that are His at His coming, who will be changed suddenly to immortality.

Gen. 2:7, I Cor. 15:47, I Cor. 15:50, Rom. 6:23, Rom. 5:12, Heb. 9:27, I Cor. 15:22, 23.

For the believer death is to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. For the ungodly death is to suffer the eternal vengeance of, and separation from God in torment. We believe, therefore, that death is not the annihilation of man but a severing of the right relation.

I Cor. 15:51, 52, II Cor. 5:8, Luke 23:43, Luke 16:23-26.

RESURRECTION—We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ really died on the Cross, and that He was buried, and on the third day He was bodily raised from the dead according to the Scriptures.*

I Cor. 15:3, 4.

The Bible teaches that there are two resurrections, the first and the last. The first resurrection, or the resurrection of the righteous, will take place at the coming of the Lord. The time of the second resurrection, including the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place at the end.

I Cor. 15:23, Rev. 20:5, 6, I Cor. 15:23, I Thess. 4:16, I Cor. 15:23-26.

JUDGMENT—We believe that the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man make it necessary for a judgment to come. This is definitely declared, and the resurrection of Christ is the guarantee that it will come. And Jesus Christ will be

*Christ's resurrection was: 1. The proof that His work of redemption was fully satisfying and acceptable to God, and, therefore, was for our justification. 2. The ground for our faith and hope. 3. The guarantee of our own resurrection, being the first fruits of them that slept, and, therefore, an assurance of the harvest, and according to His promise, believers will be raised with incorruptible bodies, changed and glorified like His own, in the twinkling of an eye. 4. The assurance of the bodily resurrection from death of all who ever lived.

Rom. 4:25, I Cor. 15:14, 17, I Cor. 15:20, Jno. 6:39, 40, 44, 54, Phil. 3:20, 21, I Cor. 15:52, John 5:28, 29, Acts 24:15.

The resurrection of the body is absolutely necessary for the complete redemption of all things.

Rom. 8:22, 23.

the Judge, and an account must be given of deeds, words, thoughts, and all the secrets of man.**

Ps. 96:13, Matt. 13:40-42, Heb. 9:27, Acts 17:31, Acts 10:42, II Tim. 4:1, Rom. 2:5, 6, Matt. 12:36, 37, I Cor. 4:5, Rom. 2:16.

XIV. Eternal Life.

We believe that the state of the blessed will be one of perfect joy and happiness and glory, far surpassing our present comprehension. And while there will be different degrees of glory, each one will enjoy a full measure of bliss and perfect satisfaction according to his capacity. Prompted by the realization that all this has come to them through the unsearchable riches of Christ's grace and mercy in redemption, the redeemed will find their greatest joy in praising and adoring their Lord in saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and

**In principle, sin and Satan were judged in Christ on the Cross. At the present time sin is judged in the believer by discipline. In the future the saints will be judged for reward or loss, according to their faithfulness or unfaithfulness. The living nations will be judged when Christ shall come in His glory. The dead of the last resurrection shall be judged before the Great White Throne. And there is also a judgment of the fallen angels in which the saints will be associated with Christ. The Bible teaches that the judgment sentence for both the just and the unjust shall be eternal.

Gal. 3:13, I Pet. 2:24, I Cor. 5:5, I Cor. 3:10-15, Luke 19:17-19, Matt. 25:31-46, Rev. 20:11-15, II Pet. 2:4, I Cor. 6:3, John 5:24, Matt. 25:46, Mark 9:45-48.

strength and honor and glory and blessing." And again: "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever! Amen."

Matt. 25:21, I Cor. 2:9, Luke 19:16-19, I Cor. 3:8, Rev. 5:12, Rev. 7:12.

STATEMENT OF FAITH--1941 (GC)

The following statement of faith, approved for the seminary by the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America in session at Souderton, Pennsylvania, August 17-22, 1941, as recorded in the minutes of said session on pages 37 and 161, was adopted by the Seminary Board in session at Chicago, July 31, 1945.

Accepting the full Bible and the Apostolic Creed:

1. We believe in one God, eternally existing and manifest as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2. We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth, born of the Virgin Mary, in His perfect humanity, His atoning death, His bodily resurrection from the dead, and His personal triumphant return.

3. We believe in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, and a future state determined by divine judgment.

4. We believe in the divine inspiration and the infallibility of the Bible as the Word of God and the only trustworthy guide of faith and life.

5. We believe a Christian is one saved by grace whose life is transformed into the likeness of Christ by His atoning death and the power of His resurrection.

6. We believe that Christ lived and taught the way of life as recorded in the Scriptures which is God's plan for individuals and the race, and that it becomes disciples of Christ to live in this way, thus manifesting in their personal and social life and relationships the love and holiness of God. And we believe that this way of life also implies nonresistance to evil by carnal means, the fullest exercises of love, and the resolute abandonment of the use of violence, including warfare. We believe further that the Christian life will of necessity express itself in nonconformity to the world in life and conduct.

7. We believe in prayer as fellowship with God, a desire to be in His will, and in its divine power.

8. We believe that the Christian Church consists of believers, who have repented from their sins, have accepted Christ by faith and are born again, and sincerely endeavor by the grace of God to live the Christian life.

9. We believe in the brotherhood of the redeemed under the fatherhood of God in Christ.

THE LOCAL CHURCH
CONFSSIONAL TRADITION

CONFESSION
or Short and Simple Statement of Faith
of Those Who are Called
the United Flemish, Frisian, and High German
ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE CHURCH

Published by the Church
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I. Concerning God the Father.

We believe with our hearts and confess every man with his mouth, according to the content of Holy Scripture, the word of God, one God who is eternal, omnipotent, holy, just, incorruptible, omniscient, gracious, compassionate. He alone is good, perfect, invisible, and incomprehensible, alone wise, the Fountain of Life, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and all things visible and invisible, Who sustains all things by the word of His Power. All things are done by Him. Heaven is His Throne, and the earth is His footstool. He is great in wisdom and mighty in power, Lord of all Lords and King of all Kings, Whose name is Lord Sabaoth. The whole world is full of His honor and glory, for in His hands is everything. To Him alone be praise, honor and glory forever and ever, Amen.

II. Concerning Christ the Son of God.

We believe on Jesus Christ, that He is our Lord and Savior, Redeemer and Giver of Salvation. He was miraculously begotten from eternity, the Eternal Son of God, begotten of the Father Himself so that He should be His beloved Son, as we are able to see and read in the Holy Scriptures. So also the beloved apostles recognized Him, as did other holy men of God, such as the apostle Peter, Nathaniel, John the Baptist, Thomas, Mary the sister of Lazarus, and others. He was sent into the world by the Father, so that He might fulfill the plan laid before the foundation of the world, namely, to redeem us from the eternal curse. For this purpose God sent His eternal Son from heaven, Who in the body of a blessed, gracious, young woman named Mary, became flesh and man, through the miraculous power and action of the Holy Spirit. He suffered for us under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and buried for our sins, the four evangelists report. He descended into hell to save us from it. On the third day He rose for our justification. He ascended to heaven, was seated at the right hand of God the almighty Father. From there He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

III. Concerning the Holy Spirit.

We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Through Him the Father and the Son work, so that He with Father and Son forms the

God-Head, as we read in the story of creation. We see them as one in the willing, acting, ruling, and accomplishing of the revelation of the Godly nature in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as a true God. We believe also in the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, as well of the just as the unjust, who all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, Who will judge all men according to their works, good or evil. After this the eternal life.

IV. Concerning the Church of God.

Concerning the Church of God and the fellowship of the saints we believe and confess that there is a Church of God, which He through His own blood has redeemed and has washed her of her sins through His blood. He has given Himself for the Church so that He might sanctify her, and has purified her through the washing of the word so that He might present her to Himself glorified, that is a church which is glorious, without spot or wrinkle, but which is holy and blameless. This Church we believe consists of the large number of people who throughout the world through faith on Jesus Christ and through obedience to the Holy Gospel have separated themselves from the sinful world and have their fellowship through the Holy Spirit with God the Father and with Christ their Head, with the multitudes of many thousands of holy angels in Heaven, and with all those who believe on Christ here on earth. Even though this church is scattered throughout all parts of the world, still these believers are members of, and constitute the body of, Christ Who is their head and foundation, their Shepherd, Lord and King. By Him the believers are ruled and guided. The signs of the true church are the right fruits of conversion: the avoidance and rejection of sins, and the life of goodness, holiness, and integrity, according to the teachings of Christ and His apostles; following in the true faith on Jesus Christ by obedience to the godly Word, and in the observance of the holy ordinances and in the unrestrained confession of God and Jesus before all men; in fervent, brotherly love toward each other, so that the unity in the Spirit may be kept in the bond of peace; by taking up the cross and truly following Christ. These are the true signs of the members of the Church of God, who gives evidence of life through godly and Christian virtues. These are purified by

Christ, and are born-again members of the body of Christ, and joint heirs of eternal life.

V. Concerning the Office of Preacher.

We believe and confess that in accordance with the teachings and practices of the Lord Christ and His apostles, God gave power to His Church to choose teachers and servants (Titus 1:5), so that the saints might be prepared for the work through which the body of Christ is built up. The choosing for such work and service is done when the servants and the church earnestly call upon the name of God, according to the example of the apostle Peter, when the disciples of Jesus Christ took two men, Joseph, called Barsabas, with a surname Just, and Matthew, prayed, and said, "Lord, discerner of all hearts, show now whom thou hast chosen of these two so that one may receive this service and office of apostle from which Judas has departed so that he might go to his place." They cast lots over them and the lot fell on Matthew, and he was added to the eleven apostles. If now the churches have need of such men for the ministry this is of great avail, and humbly implore Him that He, the discerner of all hearts, might show through the consensus of those gathered whom He has chosen for this service and office, being fully confident that Christ has faithfully promised that whatever you will ask of the Father in My Name that He will give unto you. For He is among those who believe on Him and who are gathered together in His Holy Name, whose desires are known unto Him even before they ask. Through His good Spirit He rules the will of man, so that He may reveal which one He has selected to be profitable and serviceable to His Church. Then is fulfilled the word which was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, "I will give you a shepherd according to my heart, who will feed you with wisdom and understanding." After this election has occurred it is important to note what qualities are required in such a servant, namely, he must be a blameless person, the husband of one wife, sober, temperate, modest, hospitable, apt to teach, not a heavy wine drinker, not boastful, not engaged in an unhonorable occupation, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not avaricious, one who rules well his own household, who has obedient children, with constant integrity. He must hold to the Word which is sure, and be able to teach so that through wholesome doctrine he may mightily exhort and punish the

opponents. He must be an example to the flock, he must feed the flock of Christ, not out of compulsion, but willingly; not for the sake of contemptible gain, but because of his deepest convictions; not as one who lords it over the people but as one who is an example. Then he shall receive the incorruptible crown of glory at the appearance of the chief shepherd.

VI. Concerning the Office of Deacons.

We read in the Acts of the Apostles, "In those days, however, as the number of disciples grew, there arose a murmuring among the Greeks against the Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. Then the twelve called a group of disciples together and said, It is not fitting that we should leave the ministry of God and serve at tables. Therefore, dear brethren seek among you seven men of good reputation and full of the Holy Spirit, together with others who were set aside for the service of the poor." In this the Church of God must follow the example of the Holy Apostles when there is need for such men for the service to the poor. The Church must first earnestly pray to God and after such prayer choose men who have a good report through whom the poor will be helped by the gifts of the devout souls in the church. Members of the Church work faithfully so that they may give for the need of the poor, not letting the left hand know what the right does. They eat their own bread and deprive no one whether he has much or little. For Christ said, "The poor you have with you always and if you wish you can do good to them." Therefore they must follow the teachings of the Apostle Paul: "If anyone has an office, let him take care of that office. Is anyone a teacher, let him apply himself to teaching. He that exhorts, let him await exhortation. He that gives, let him do so with simplicity. He that rules, let him do it with diligence. Let him that shows kindness do so gladly. Let love be without hypocrisy."

VII. Concerning Christian Baptism.

Baptism is an outward, visible, ordinance commanded by Christ Himself for incorporation into His Church. Its practice consists of this: all those who hear the teaching of the Holy Gospel, believe, and with penitent heart gladly accept it, must be baptized with water unto a blessed life according to the command of

Christ when He said, "Unto Me is given all power in Heaven and on Earth; therefore go, and teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creatures. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved. But he who does not believe shall be condemned." The holy apostles have diligently followed this command by teaching and preaching of the faith of Jesus Christ through which many believed and were baptized, both men and women. This also happened on the holy day of Pentecost or the festival in Jerusalem, where the apostle Peter said to the Jews: Let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, Lord and Christ. When they heard that they were greatly disturbed, and said to Peter and the other apostles: "O men, dear brethren, what shall we do? Peter said to them repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, for this promise is given to you and to your children and to all those far away whom the Lord our God will call. Those who gladly received the word were baptized and there were added to the church in those days about three thousand souls." So also now, those children who earlier were far away, when they have come so far that they are able to understand that voice which comes to their ears through the teaching of the Holy Gospel, and they receive this message gladly, and with penitent heart, and believe, they too are to receive baptism. The apostle Paul said, "Faith comes through the preaching, and preaching through the word of God." For those who truly believe, the blessing which comes to them from God through baptism is not the putting away of the uncleanness of the flesh, but rather the washing of the inner sinful uncleanness of the soul, through the shed blood of Christ, through which we have the forgiveness of sins. Baptism is the bond of a good conscience with God, brought about by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, through which the faithful comfort each other with the precious promise of eternal blessedness. In baptism those who are baptized are pledged and committed to leave all their sins buried through baptism in the death of Christ according to the teaching of the apostle Paul, who says, "What shall we say now? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may become stronger? Yet that be far from us. How should we wish to live in sin since we have died

to it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized in Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? So then we have been buried with Christ through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father so also we shall walk in a newness of life, and put on Christ through baptism, even as the apostle says, "As many of you as have been baptized they have put on Christ." So also must everyone after he has received God's gift, in order to better the body of Christ in temporal and spiritual matters, earnestly apply themselves so that as faithful stewards of God, and fellow-citizens of the spiritual Jerusalem, they may keep the laws of their King and Head, and be subordinate and obedient according to the teachings of Christ, who has said, "Teach them to observe all things which I have commanded you."

VIII. Concerning the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is an outward, visible, evangelical ordinance, according to Christ's command and the example of the Apostles, for promoting a holy life. Bread and wine are used according to the example of Christ. The bread is broken and, together with the wine, is distributed and given to those who are believers, and have been baptized on the profession of their faith, according to Christ's command. The bread is eaten by them, the wine is drunk, and the bitter suffering and death of Christ is thereby proclaimed, according to the teaching of Paul who said, "I have received from the Lord that which I have given to you. For the Lord, in the night when he was betrayed, took bread, thanked, broke it and said, Take eat, this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me. In like manner the wine after the meal, and said, This wine is the New Testament in my blood. This do as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat of this bread and drink of this wine you shall proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes." In this outward meal there is represented and symbolized the offering on the cross of the holy body of Christ, and the shedding of His precious blood for the forgiveness of our sins, and that He in His heavenly estate is the life-giving bread, food, and drink of our souls. In the keeping of this spiritual supper, Christ unites Himself with all who truly believe, for He says in His word, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, If any

man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will eat the supper with him, and he with me." Furthermore, He teaches us that we, through our mind and heart, should rise toward heaven in holy prayer in order to acquire the true riches in Christ. The Lord's Supper exhorts us to be thankful for the great goodness of God which He through love has shown us through Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper unites us in peace, love, unity of the spirit and to true Christian fellowship, as the apostle said, "The blessed wine, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For as there is one bread, so we, being many, are one body, since we all partake of one bread."

IX. Concerning the Footwashing of the Lord.

Footwashing among those who believe we confess to be an ordinance of Christ as was demonstrated by Him to His disciples. He has exhorted us to follow this example, according to the words, "Do you know what I have done unto you? You call me Master and Lord, and you say right, for I am Master and Lord. If now then I, who am your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you too shall wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you might do as I have done unto you. If you know this, happy are you if you do it." The reason why the Lord Jesus has commanded footwashing is this, to remind us that through grace by the blood of Christ we have been washed of our sins and that He our Lord and Master through this deeply humbling example has exhorted us to be truly humble and lowly. We are to show this work of love to those who come into our house and are received by us, for the apostle Paul also regarded footwashing as one of the works of virtue.

X. Concerning Holy Matrimony.

Concerning matrimony we confess that is an ordinance of God established by God in paradise and confirmed in the case of our first parents, Adam and Eve, one man and one woman, created in the likeness of God, while they were yet in grace before God. He blessed them so that they might multiply and fill the earth. Fornication and impurity shall be avoided, so that there is no misuse of this ordinance. In such an ordinance of God, confirmed also by the Lord Jesus,

all Christians may be bound together except those who are too closely tied by bonds of blood. Such people, after prayer, may be bound together in matrimony and live together as Christians from then on till the end, so that each man may have his own wife, and each woman may have her own husband. In matrimony man and wife are so bound together and mutually obligated that for no reason and for no cause whatever may they be parted from each other, except for fornication and adultery, even as we read concerning this in the evangelist Matthew, where the Pharisees and Sadducees came to Christ, tempted Him and said, "Is it right that a man should be divorced from His wife for any cause? He, however, answered and said unto them, Have you not read that He who in the beginning created man made one man and one wife, and said, For this cause will a man forsake father and mother and hold to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. So then they are not two but one flesh. What God has joined together let not man put apart. They said to Him again, why then did Moses command us to give a bill of divorce, so that there might be divorce? He said to them, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of the hardness of your heart, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you whoever divorces his wife, except for causes of fornication, and marries another, he breaks the marriage bond and he who marries a person who has been divorced also breaks the marriage bond." From this it may be clearly seen and understood that the bond of matrimony is a firm indissoluble bond which may not be broken nor may the parties be divorced from each other except for cause of fornication, even as the Lord Christ said. A brother may take his sister in the faith in the church of God as wife, and a sister has her free will to accept such a brother or to reject him. For the apostle says, "A wife is bound by the law as long as her husband is alive, but if her husband dies she is again free to marry as she wishes, only let it be in the Lord." This means, that it must be according to the teaching of the Lord and in His will and good pleasure.

XI. Concerning Secular Authority.

Concerning government we confess that God, who is king of all kings and Lord of all lords, has established kings and government in all lands for the common good and mutual benefit of the people so that

they may lead a good, honorable, civil life. For there is no government except of God, and where there is government, it is ordained of God. He who opposes government opposes God's ordinance. And those who oppose shall be condemned. For not those who do good but those who do evil need fear the authority. Therefore everyone is commanded to be subordinate to the power of government, for it is God's servant to punish him who does evil. It does not (sic) bear the sword in vain. It is there for protection of the good and to punish those who do evil. Therefore all believers, indeed all people, are commanded by the word of God to fear their authority, to honor and to be obedient to it in all things which are not contrary to the word of God. Government must be given tribute, duties, and taxes in accordance with the teaching of the Lord, and according to the teaching of the apostle Peter, who says we must be obedient: "Submit to all human ordinance for the sake of the Lord, whether this be to the king, as supreme; or to governors, as those who are appointed by him for the punishment of evil-doers and for the praise of them that do well." We must also pray for government according to the command of the apostle Paul, who said, "I exhort you, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people; for kings, and for all those in authority, so that we may have a peaceful and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty." May the Highest give them wisdom and understanding peacefully to govern their land, cities, and subjects so that they may eventually receive the reward of eternal blessedness. To God the eternal King, unchangeable, invisible and alone wise, be glory and honor forever, Amen.

XII. Concerning the Swearing of Oaths.

Concerning the swearing of oaths we understand and confess that the fathers of the Old Testament were permitted to swear an oath by the name of God; but the Lord Jesus, the Son of the living God, the King, Founder, and Establisher of the New Covenant, whose command we are obligated and committed to hear, has in the following words forbidden believers to swear an oath: "You have heard that to those in old times, it was said, You shall not swear falsely and you shall keep your oath to God. But I say to you that you should not swear at all, either by heaven for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is His

footstool, nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Also, you should not swear by your head, for you are not able to make one of your hairs white or black. Let your speech be yes, yes, no, no. Anything beyond that is evil." Therefore we know that we should not permit ourselves to be moved beyond the honest use of "yes" and "no." For our "yes" and our "no" must be as truthful as the highest oath. Similarly, the apostle James has exhorted us with the words, "Above all things, my brothers, do not swear, either by Heaven or by earth, nor by any other oath, but let your word be 'yes' and 'no' so that you may not be hypocrites." From this it is clearly to be seen that the New Testament does not permit to swearing or taking an oath. But our words must be honest and the truth must be spoken from the heart. The "yes" and the "no" may not be given or used lightly.

XIII. Concerning Vengeance.

Our Lord Christ said, "You have heard that it has been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, that you shall not resist evil; love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in Heaven, for He lets His sun rise on the evil and the good and He lets rain fall on the righteous and the unrighteous." From this we understand that man may practice no vengeance against his enemies. This also has been confirmed by the apostle Paul: "Do not avenge yourselves, my beloved, but give room to the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. If your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him to drink; if you do that you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome of evil but overcome evil with good." The apostle Peter also says, "If anyone endures evil for the sake of his conscience, endures evil and suffers unjustly, this is praise-worthy. For what kind of praise is it if you are punished because of evil? But if you suffer because of good, that is acceptable before God. For unto this you have been called even as Christ has suffered for us and has given us an example, that we should follow in His footsteps. He did no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. He did not revile when he was reviled, nor threaten when He

suffered. Rather, He left it all to Him who judges righteously."

XV. Concerning the Christian Ban in the Church.

(Note: This appears incorrectly as XV in the original.)

We believe that the ban is a separation from those members who are living in open sin and leading a wicked life. This separation occurs for their betterment and not for their condemnation, so that the spirit may be saved unto the day of the Lord Jesus. For thus it is taught us by our Lord Christ, "If your brother sins against you, then go to him and admonish him between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have won your brother; if he does not hear you, then take another one or two brothers, so that all things may rest upon two or three witnesses. If he does not hear them, then tell it to the church. If he does not hear the church, then regard him as a heathen and a publican." Those who remain obstinate in their sins and separate themselves from God do not belong in the fellowship of Christ. Instead, they must be punished before all, so that they may be an example to instill fear into others, as the apostle says, "Put out from among you those who are evil. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole dough? Discard the old leaven, so that you may be fresh dough. For what part do believers have with unbelievers?" The avoidance of him who is unrepentant we believe to be the method whereby, according to the teaching of the apostle Paul, the sinner will be convicted of the error of his way and will be converted. For if anyone who calls himself a brother is an adulterer, or is avaricious, or is an idolator, or a scoffer, or a drunkard, or robber, with him you are not to eat. Again Paul says, We command you, dear brothers who lead a disorderly life, who dishonor the teaching of Christ with division and evil. From such you should withdraw yourselves, for they are not serving the Lord Jesus Christ but their own flesh. Similarly, avoid a person who remains a heretic after he has been exhorted once or twice. But do not regard him as an enemy, but rather in love encourage him as a brother. Treat such a person with helpful compassion and Christian moderation, according to righteousness, for these are virtues which a Christian should show to all people, even unto his enemies. Concerning the reception of those into the Church who have repented,

we believe that at all times we should be willing and prepared to receive into the Church once again the sinner who had been placed under the ban but who has shown genuine repentance and sorrow for his sins. His earlier faults shall be forgiven him. For the apostle Peter (sic) said to the Corinthians, that he who has been punished by so many should be heartily forgiven and comforted, so that he may not bear overwhelming sorrow. Therefore, I exhort you to show love to him. For this reason I have written you, in order to see if you are indeed willing to be obedient in all things. Him whom you forgive, I forgive also. So much for the Christian ban and the avoidance of the unrepentant and the reception of those who have genuinely repented.

XV. Concerning the Return of Christ, the Resurrection of the Dead and the Last Judgment.

We believe and confess that the Lord Jesus Christ, our only Prophet, Priest and King, even as He went to Heaven, will come again to earth in clouds of Heaven, with great power and glory. For He Himself the Lord will come with a great cry and the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God from Heaven, and the dead in Christ will be resurrected first. After that, we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the twinkling of an eye, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. For the trumpet shall sound and the dead will arise incorruptible, with their own bodies, in which they have done good or bad--some to eternal life, some to eternal condemnation and shame. And the Lord Christ said, "The hour is coming and is even now here in which all who are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment." In what form the dead will arise the apostle Paul, with glorious proofs tells us, for he says, "The body is sown corruptible; it will be resurrected incorruptible. It is sown in dishonor; it will be raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it will be raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it will be resurrected a spiritual body. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ and every man will have to answer to God so that each man may receive according to that which he has done during his life, whether it was good or bad." For the Lord will come in His glory and all the holy angels with

Him, and He will sit on the throne of glory, and before all nations will be gathered. And he will separate them even as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats. And the sheep will be put on the right, and the goats on the left side. Then the King will say to those on His right, Come here, you blessed of the Father, inherit the Kingdom which was prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Those, who here on earth have shown faith, righteousness, love, and kindness, will go into eternal life, and be with the Lord forever, where there will be fulness of joy. They will rejoice at His right hand forever, where there will be no sorrow nor temptation. They will rejoice with joy unspeakable, in eternal heavenly glory and majesty, together with thousands of holy angels, and together also with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and indeed all the holy ones and the elect ones, to be with Him forever. Therefore the apostle says to the believers, "Comfort one another with these words, and watch, for you know that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." Then will he also say to those on His left, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels." These are the unrighteous, and those who did not believe, who did not recognize God here and were not obedient to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, who also have done no works of love and kindness. These will go into eternal pain and suffer eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and His great might when He will come and appear gloriously. They will be the objects of wrath, sorrow, and fear, just like all people who have done evil. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Their worm will not die and their fire will not be put out. They will have their portion of the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, and will be tormented day and night from eternity to eternity.

May God, who is full of grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ His greatly beloved Son and through the power of the Holy Spirit, keep us all from this terrible punishment of the godless, and may God give us grace that here on earth we may lead holy lives, die in blessedness, and joyfully be resurrected from the dead to eternal life and the greatly desired blessedness. Amen, Amen.

Unser altes
Glaubensbekenntnis
in
abgekürzter Darstellung,
herausgegeben
von
der
Mennonitengemeinde
bei
Beatrice in Nebraska
1918.

Vorwort.

Seit längerer Zeit ist in unserer Gemeinde mehrfach der Wunsch geäußert worden, unser Bekenntnis für das Vorlesen in der Kirche in verkürzter Form zu haben. Dieser Wunsch ist zum Gemeindebeschluß erhoben worden; die vorliegende Arbeit ist ein Versuch in der Ausführung desselben. Gott gebe Gnade, daß unser altes Bekenntnis in dieser neuen Form bei fleißigem Gebrauch, besonders von Seiten der sich zur Taufe vorbereitenden Jugend der Gemeinde zum Segen diene. Möge die Gemeinde sich weiter bauen auf dem einigen Grunde, der da gelegt ist, Jesus Christus von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit, daß alle Glieder derselben in ihrem Wandel vor Freund und Feind Zeugnis ablegen von dem Geist der Wahrheit und der Liebe, der in der Gemeinde Jesu wirksam sein soll, daß sie als Kinder des Segens dem großen Friedenskönig nachfolgen, bis er seine Gemeinde zur herrlichen Vollendung führen wird nach seinem heiligen und gewissen Rat.

Der Gemeindevorstand.

Beatrice in Nebraska,
im März, 1918.

1. Von dem dreieinigen Gott.

Wir glauben und bekennen, daß da sei ein einiger, ewiger, allmächtiger und heiliger Gott, der Himmel, Erde und Meer und alles, was darinnen ist, geschaffen und zubereitet hat und auch erhält.

1. Mos.
1. 2.

Diesen Gott bekennen wir, wie er sich bei der Taufe Christi offenbart hat, als Vater, Sohn und heiligen Geist; wie auch unser Heiland den Aposteln den Befehl gab: „Lehret alle Völker und taufet sie in dem Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des heiligen Geistes.“ Wir bekennen demnach Gott den Vater als Schöpfer, der die ganze Welt erschaffen hat und sie regiert. Wir bekennen ebenso die wahre Gottheit des Sohnes Gottes. Der Apostel Johannes zeugt von ihm: „Dieser ist der wahrhaftige Gott und das ewige Leben.“ Der Apostel Paulus bekennet: „Christus ist Gott über alles.“ Jesus Christus ist aber auch wahrhaftiger Mensch. Johannes schreibt davon: „Das Wort ward Fleisch und wohnte unter uns.“ Diese heilige Menschwerdung Gottes ist deshalb geschehen, damit er unser Mittler werden und uns mit Gott versöhnen könnte durch das Blut an seinem Kreuz. In der Ausführung seines Heilsplanes erweist sich Jesus Christus als unser Prophet, Hoherpriester und König. Er ist unser Prophet, der uns den vollen Rat Gottes zu unsrer Seligkeit verkündigt und mit Wundertaten bekräftigt hat. Als unser Hoherpriester hat er sich selbst für uns zum Opfer gegeben und dadurch in Ewigkeit vollendet, die geheiligt werden. Als solcher betet er auch für sein Volk und vertritt uns, sitzend zu der Rechten Gottes. Als König gibt er den Seinen Gebote und Rechte und beschützt und belohnt sie. Er herrscht auch über seine Feinde, bis Gott sie zum Schemel seiner Füße gelegt haben wird. — Wir glauben auch an den heiligen Geist, der vom Vater ausgeht durch den Sohn. Er ist nicht nur die Kraft, die den Aposteln und den ersten Christen mitgeteilt war, sondern die Ursache dieser Kraft. Paulus bezeugt davon: „Dies alles, nämlich Gaben und Kräfte, wirkt derselbe einige Geist.“ Petrus bekennet den heiligen Geist als Gott in dem Strafgericht über Ananias, der dem heiligen Geist gelogen hatte, da er jenem zurief: „Du hast nicht Menschen, sondern Gott gelogen.“

Matth.
3, 16.

Matth.
28, 19.

1. Joh.
5, 20.

Röm.
9, 5.

Joh.
1, 14.

Rol.
1, 20.

Joh. 20,
30, 31.

Hebr. 10,
12, 14.

Pf.
110, 1.

Joh.
16, 7.

1 Kor.
12, 11.

Apg.
5, 4.

2. Von der heiligen Schrift.

Wir glauben und bekennen, daß Gott der Herr uns die heilige Schrift als ein unfehlbares Zeugnis der göttlichen Wahrheit gegeben hat. Wir nennen die Bücher des alten und des neuen Testaments die ganze heilige Schrift. Die Wahrheit des alten Testaments ist bezeugt durch unsern Herrn Jesum Christum und seine Apostel, die sich in ihren Reden und Schriften auf dasselbe berufen. Seine Wahrheit wird auch besonders dadurch bekundet, daß das neue Testament die getreue Erfüllung aller im alten Testamente gegebenen Verheißungen und Weissagungen ist, wie im Leben, Leiden, Sterben und Auferstehen des Heilandes, so auch in der Gründung und Führung seiner Gemeinde. Die heilige Schrift ist nicht aus menschlichem Willen hervorgegangen, sondern die heiligen Menschen Gottes haben geredet, getrieben durch den heiligen Geist. Wir haben alle menschlichen Schriften an dem Worte Gottes zu prüfen und danach anzunehmen oder zu verwerfen.

Joh.
5, 39.

Apg.
10, 43

2. Pet.
1, 21.

3. Von dem Ebenbild Gottes und von dem Fall Adams.

Wir glauben und bekennen, daß der Mensch nach Gottes Bild geschaffen ist; denn so lehrt die heilige Schrift: „Gott schuf den Menschen ihm zum Bilde, zum Bilde Gottes schuf er ihn.“ Gott hatte dem Menschen den Garten Eden zur Wohnung gegeben und ihm die Herrschaft über die Geschöpfe verliehen. Der Mensch ist aber in diesem göttlichen Zustand nicht geblieben. Gott hatte dem Menschen erlaubt, von allen Früchten der Bäume im Garten zu essen; nur von dem Baum der Erkenntnis des Guten und Bösen sollte er nicht essen; welches Tages er davon aße, sollte er des Todes sterben. Dieses Gebot haben Adam und Eva durch den Betrug der Schlange übertreten, indem sie durch Unglauben den Gehorsam gegen Gott brachen und von der verbotnen Frucht aßen. Dadurch sind sie und alle ihre Nachkommen in Sünde und Tod gefallen. Die Sünde ist der fleischliche Sinn und die Lust zum Bösen. Sie ist zu allen Menschen durchgedrungen; denn Adam zeugte Kinder, die seinem Bilde ähnlich waren. In diesem Sinne bekennet David: „Ich

1. Mos. 1, 27. 28.

1. Mos. 2, 17. 18.

1. Mos. 3, 1—24.

Röm. 5, 12.

bin aus sündlichem Samen gezeugt, und meine Mutter hat mich in Sünden empfangen.“ Der Herr Jesus spricht: „Was vom Fleisch geboren ist, das ist Fleisch.“ Kein Mensch ist ohne Sünde als allein Jesus, der von dem heiligen Geist empfangen war. Der Tod, der über Adam und alle seine Kinder gekommen ist, ist ein dreifacher Tod. Erstens der leibliche Tod; zweitens der geistliche Tod, der da besteht in dem völligen Unvermögen zur Aufrichtung der Gerechtigkeit, die vor Gott gilt; drittens der ewige Tod, der da ist die Abscheidung von Gott, und als Folge davon die ewige Verdammnis.

Ps.
51, 7.
Joh.
3, 6.
Hebr.
9, 27.
Röm.
3, 23.
Röm. 7,
17=24.
Eph.
21, 8.

4. Von der Erlösung durch Christum.

Wir glauben und bekennen, daß uns Gott in diesem Fall nicht hat liegen lassen; darum sandte er seinen Sohn zum Heiland der Welt. Dieser wurde um unsertwillen ein Mensch und hat durch sein Leben, Leiden, Sterben, Auferstehen und durch seine Himmelfahrt die ganze Erlösung vollbracht. So bekennet Petrus: „Er hat uns erlöst durch sein teures Blut,“ und Paulus: „Jesus Christus ist in die Welt gekommen, die Sünder selig zu machen.“ Er hat dem Teufel die Macht genommen und eine ewige Erlösung erfunden. Diese Erlösung ist der Inhalt des Evangeliums, das in der Welt verkündigt wird, auf daß alle, die an Jesum glauben, nicht verloren werden, sondern das ewige Leben haben. Wer Jesum nicht annimmt, geht um seines Unglaubens willen verloren; denn der Herr Jesus sagt: „Wer aber nicht glaubt, der ist schon gerichtet; denn er glaubt nicht an den Namen des eingebornen Sohnes Gottes.“

Joh.
3, 16.
1. Pet.
1, 18 19
1. Tim.
1, 15.
Hebr.
9, 12.
Joh.
3, 16.

Joh.
3, 18.

5. Von der allgemeinen Gnade Gottes und des Menschen freiem Willen.

Die Gnade, die Gott der Menschheit in der Schenkung seines Sohnes erwiesen hat, bekennen wir als eine allgemeine Gnade, durch die er alle Menschen zu sich lockt und zu seinem Reich beruft. Diese Gnade ist eine allgemeine, weil der gnädige Gott niemand davon ausgeschlossen hat; denn alle, die an ihn glauben, sollen nicht verloren werden, sondern das ewige Leben

1 Tim.
2, 4.

haben. Kein Mensch aber kann aus eignen Kräften glauben und sich bekehren, sondern Gott muß einen jeden Menschen durch seine Gnade zuvor ergreifen. Es erweist sich darum die Gnade Gottes an uns als eine zuvorkommende Gnade. Sie ist der Zug des Vaters zum Sohne, wie der Herr Jesus sagt: „Es kann niemand zu mir kommen; es sei denn, daß ihn ziehe der Vater.“ Zweitens erweist sie sich als eine mitwirkende Gnade des heiligen Geistes, der das gehörte Evangelium des Friedens in uns befestigt und kräftig macht, also daß wir Jesum als unsern Herrn und Erlöser annehmen. Drittens bekennen wir auch die mitfolgende Gnade des heiligen Geistes, in der wir aus Gottes Macht bewahret werden zur Seligkeit. Diese Gnadenerweisungen des heiligen Geistes wirken in dem Menschen nicht mit Gewalt, sondern nur so weit, als der Mensch seinen Willen in den Willen Gottes zur Bekehrung übergibt. Der allmächtige Gott zwingt niemand mit Gewalt weder zum Guten noch zum Bösen, bestimmt auch keinen durch eine unbedingte Gnadenwahl, sondern läßt uns unsern freien Willen.

6. Von dem Glauben an Christum.

Wir bekennen, daß es nicht genug sei, die Geschichte Jesu zu wissen und als allgemeine Wahrheit anzunehmen, daß auch selbst das Bekennen mit dem Munde an sich nicht der wahre Glaube sei. Der wahre, seligmachende Glaube ist vielmehr ein Glaube des Herzens. „Er ist eine gewisse Zuversicht des, das man hoffet und nicht zweifelt an dem, das man nicht siehet.“ In diesem Glauben liegt die Erkenntnis unsres verdorbenen Zustandes; er ist dann aber auch zugleich das lebendige Aufsehen auf Jesum, als das Lamm Gottes. Der Glaube nimmt Jesum auf; dadurch wird man ein Kind Gottes, das Vergebung der Sünden hat, das nun nicht mehr trachtet nach der Menschen Luste, sondern vor allem danach, dem Willen Gottes zu leben in der Nachfolge Jesu. Dieser Glaube wird durch Gottes Wort und Geist in uns gewirkt, wenn wir Gott unser Herz öffnen, ihm gehorsam zu werden. Der Glaube ist also der Sieg, der die Welt überwindet und zum seligen Anschauen Gottes führt.

7. Von der Wiedergeburt und den guten Werken.

Wir bekennen, daß jeder Mensch, weil er vom Fleisch geboren ist, fleischlich gesinnt ist. Wer in's Reich Gottes eingehen will, muß daher, wie unser Heiland dem Nikodemus sagt, von neuem geboren werden. Die Wiedergeburt ist die Erneuerung des Ebenbildes Gottes im Menschen. In ihr erhält der Mensch einen geistlichen Sinn, in dem er der Sünde entsagt und sein Herz Gott übergibt. Die Wiedergeburt wirkt Gott in uns. Jakobus schreibt: „Er hat uns gezeuget nach seinem Willen durch das Wort der Wahrheit.“ Weil der Wiedergeborene der göttlichen Natur teilhaftig geworden ist, wandelt er ohne allen Zwang in der Liebe und guten Werken. Wo der Glaube in der Liebe tätig ist, da ist die Wiedergeburt oder, wie Paulus sagt, die neue Kreatur.

Joh. 3,
5, 6
Röm.
8, 29
Röm.
8, 5-9.
Gal.
1, 18.

Gal.
5, 6.
Gal.
6, 15.

8. Von der Rechtfertigung durch den Glauben.

Wir bekennen, daß alle, die wahrhaft an Jesum Christum glauben, durch den Glauben gerechtfertigt sind. Paulus lehrt davon: „So halten wir nun dafür, daß der Mensch gerecht werde ohne des Gesetzes Werke, allein durch den Glauben.“ Christi Verdienst und Gerechtigkeit wird also von Gott dem Gläubigen aus Gnaden zugerechnet und beigelegt, wodurch Christi Gerechtigkeit des Gläubigen rechtmäßiges Eigentum wird. Er hat also durchaus keine Gerechtigkeit, die aus der Befolgung des Gesetzes kommt, sondern ganz allein die, die als Geschenk von Christo dem Glaubenden beigelegt wird. Wer nun also aus Gnaden gerecht und aus einem verdammungswürdigen Sünder ein gerechtfertigtes Kind Gottes geworden ist, der empfängt in dem heiligen Geist eine kindliche Liebe zu Gott, dem Heilande. Diese Liebe dringt und treibt ihn zu allem guten Werk, also daß man sich eines Gott wohlgefälligen Wandels befleißigt. Wer so von der Sünde frei und Gottes Knecht geworden ist, der hat in solchem Glauben die Frucht, daß er heilig wird.

Röm.
3, 28.

Röm.
4, 6.

Rol.
2, 13.
Phil.
3, 9.

Röm.
5, 5.
2. Kor.
5, 14.
Röm.
6, 22.

1. Pet.
2, 5.

1. Tim.
3, 5.

Ephes.
5, 25.

9. Von der Gemeinde Gottes.

Die gläubigen Kinder Gottes erbauen sich als lebendige Steine zu einem heiligen Tempel Gottes auf den Eckstein Jesum Christum. Sie heißen die Gemeinde Gottes, auch die Ge-

1. Kor. 6, 15. meinde Jesu Christi. Die Gemeinde ist mit ihrem Herrn so genau verbunden wie die Glieder eines Leibes mit dem Haupte.
1. Kor. 12, 25-27. Die Gläubigen sind demnach untereinander einer des andern Glied. Deshalb soll niemand Gefallen an sich selber haben, sondern einer soll dem andern dienen mit der Gabe, die er empfangen hat. Deshalb sollen die Gläubigen fleißig zusammenkommen, sich am Worte des Herrn zu erbauen. Diese Versammlungen sollen sie nicht verlassen aus Trägheit oder Eigendünkel. Und ob sich auch Heuchler und falsche Glieder in die Gemeinde einschleichen, so soll doch den rechtschaffenen Kindern Gottes deswegen nicht der Mut entfallen, weil bis zum Ende sowohl Fromme als auch Böse untereinander sein werden. Der Herr Jesus wird an dem großen Gerichtstage die Frommen und Bösen wohl zu scheiden wissen.
1. Pet. 4, 10. Jak. 1, 17. Kol. 8, 16. Hebr. 10, 25. Matth. 13, 30.

10. Von dem Amt der Lehrer und Diener in der Gemeinde.

- Ephes. 4, 11. 12. Wir bekennen, daß Gott verschiedene Aemter in der Gemeinde eingesetzt hat, damit dieselbe bedient und erbaut werde. Deshalb haben die Apostel gewisse Männer zu Aufsehern und Ältesten in den Gemeinden verordnet, auch ihren Nachfolgern befohlen, in dieser Weise, wo es nötig würde, fortzufahren. Daß eine solche Erwählung mittelbar durch die Gemeinde geschehen solle, ist aus Apg. 1, 23. 26 und Kap. 6 zu ersehen bei der Wahl des Matthias ins Apostelamt und bei der Einsetzung der sieben Diakonen. Das Amt des Dienstes in der Gemeinde ist also eine göttliche Ordnung, die nach dem Vorgang der Apostel unterhalten werden soll. Die Gemeinde hat deshalb auch, sobald das Bedürfnis da ist, sich nach Männern umzusehen, die die zu solchen Aemtern nötigen Eigenschaften haben, wie sie Paulus 1. Tim. 3 und Tit. 1 und Petrus 1. Pet. 5 aufzählen. Diese sollen der Gemeinde den vollen Rat Gottes zur Seligkeit verkündigen, fleißig für sie beten und über die Seelen wachen, als die da Rechenschaft für sie geben sollen. Die Bedienung des Lehramtes soll von den Diakonen oder Mitdienern nach Apg. 6. unterstützt werden. Sie sollen durch willige Beisteuer der Gemeinde in den Stand gesetzt werden, die Armen in derselben zu unterstützen, auch sonst eine hilfreiche Hand bieten, daß die Gemeinde Gott wohlgefällig versorgt werde.
- Apg. 20, 27. Hebr. 13, 17.

11. Von der heiligen Taufe.

Wir bekennen, daß an denen, die ihre Sünden bußfertig bekennen und an Jesum Christum glauben, die Wassertaufe vollzogen werden soll. Jesus hat seinen Jüngern befohlen: „Gehet hin in alle Welt und lehret alle Völker und taufet sie im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des heiligen Geistes.“ Diesen Befehl haben die Apostel treu befolgt und diejenigen, die das gepredigte Wort gläubig annahmen, auf das Bekenntnis ihres Glaubens getauft. Deshalb taufen wir auch nur solche Personen, die ihren Glauben an Jesum Christum selbst bekennen. Die christliche Wassertaufe ist eine Taufe in den Tod Christi; sie bildet die reinigende Kraft des Blutes Christi ab und verbindet uns, in einem neuen Wesen des Geistes zu wandeln. Sie ist nach der Lehre des Apostels Petrus der Bund eines guten Gewissens mit Gott. Sie ist somit auch die Einverleibung der Gläubigen in Christo und in seine Gemeinde.

Apg. 2
38. 41.
Matth.
28, 19. 20.

Röm. 6,
3. 4.
1 Pet.
3, 21.
1. Kor.
12, 13.

12. Von dem heiligen Abendmahl des Herrn.

Wir bekennen, daß der Herr Jesus das heilige Abendmahl in der Nacht, da er verraten ward, mit seinen Jüngern unterhalten hat. Nach dem Essen des Osterlammes nahm er das Brot, dankte und brach's und gab es seinen Jüngern und sprach: Nehmet, esset, das ist mein Leib, der für euch gegeben und gebrochen wird, solches tut zu meinem Gedächtnis. Desselbigen gleichen auch den Kelch. dankte, gab ihn seinen Jüngern und sprach: Trinket alle daraus; das ist das neue Testament in meinem Blut, das für euch und für viele vergossen wird zur Vergebung der Sünden; solches tut zu meinem Gedächtnis. Daß diese heilige Handlung dauernd von den Christen unterhalten werden soll, erhellt aus dem wiederholten Befehl unsres Heilandes: Solches tut zu meinem Gedächtnis. Deshalb kamen auch die apostolischen Gemeinden am ersten Tage der Woche zusammen, das Brot zu brechen. Der Genuß des heiligen Abendmahls schließt manche Segnungen für die ein, die es würdig unterhalten. Erstens wird uns von seiten unsres Heilandes der wichtige Inhalt des Evangeliums aufs nachdrücklichste befestigt und versiegelt, daß das Blut des neuen Testaments die Seligkeit des Sünders sei und Jesu gebrochener Leib das wahre Le-

1. Kor.
11, 23.
Matth.
26, 26-28

Apg.
20, 7.
Joh. 3,
14-17.
Joh.
6, 50.
Joh. 6,
53-58.

benzbrot. Zweitens wird auf seiten der Gläubigen eine herzliche Liebe und Dankbarkeit zu Gott und Jesu erweckt, und drittens werden wir dadurch zur wahren Bruderliebe ermuntert, wenn wir erwägen, daß wir viele ein Leib sind, die weil wir alle eines gesegneten Brotes und Welches teilhaftig geworden sind und dadurch in der Gemeinschaft des Leibes und Blutes Christi stehen. Diejenigen, die würdig bei dem Abendmahl erscheinen wollen, müssen bußfertige und gläubige Christen sein, die schriftmäßig getauft sind und mit der Gemeinde und ihren Nebenmenschen vereinigt und im Frieden stehen. „Der Mensch aber prüfe sich selbst, und also esse er von diesem Brot und trinke von diesem Kelch.“

13. Von dem Fußwaschen der Gläubigen.

Luk. 22,
24=27
Matth.
20, 25=28
Joh. 13,
4=17.

Nachdem der Herr Jesus das Passahmahl gehalten hatte, wusch er seinen Jüngern die Füße und sprach: „So ich nun, euer Herr und Meister, euch die Füße gewaschen habe, so sollt auch ihr euch untereinander die Füße waschen. Ein Beispiel habe ich euch gegeben, daß ihr tut, wie ich euch getan habe.“ Damit hat der Herr Jesus vorstellen wollen, wie er aus lauter Liebe sich erniedrigte und Knechtsgestalt angenommen hat, uns von Sünden zu reinigen und zu erlösen und uns also gelehrt, daß wir ihm nachfolgen und in Demut und Liebe zu jedem, auch dem niedrigsten Dienst bereit sein und dem Nächsten, wenn es erforderlich ist, in Demut und Freuden auch die Füße waschen sollen.

14. Von dem christlichen Ehestand.

Wir bekennen, daß der Ehestand von Gott dem Herrn an Adam und Eva eingesetzt ist, dergestalt, daß ein Mann und ein Weib in der Ehe sein sollen. Der Herr Jesus sagt von den Eheleuten: „Es werden die zwei ein Fleisch sein.“ Es sollen daher Eheleute auch nicht geschieden werden. Der Herr Jesus sagt davon: „Wer sich von seinem Weibe scheidet, es sei denn um der Hurerei willen, und freiet eine andre, der bricht die Ehe, und wer die Abgeschiedne freiet, der bricht auch die Ehe.“ Personen, die miteinander in die Ehe treten wollen, dürfen nach 3. Mos. 18 und 20 nicht zu nahe im Geblüt sein. Sie sollen auch gleichen

Glaubens und Gottesdienstes sein; denn das Freien soll im Herrn geschehen. Darum ermahnen wir einen jeden, in gebührender Ordnung zur Ehe zu schreiten. Wenn aber ein Glied der Gemeinde außerhalb derselben heiratet, so erfolgt damit sein Austritt aus der Gemeinde.

1. Kor.
7, 39.

15. Von dem Amt der Obrigkeit.

Wir bekennen nach Röm. 13, daß die Obrigkeit eine göttliche Ordnung sei, der wir untertänig und gehorsam sein sollen in allen Dingen, die nicht wider Gottes Gebot streiten. Wir sollen daher die obrigkeitlichen Abgaben willig und gewissenhaft entrichten, wie auch der Herr Jesus den Zinsgroſchen für sich erlegen ließ. Wir sollen auch nach Pauli Anweisung für die Obrigkeit beten. Ein obrigkeitliches Amt anzunehmen, fühlen wir uns nur dann verpflichtet, wenn dasselbe nicht mit unsern Pflichten gegen Gott in Widerspruch steht. Wir wollen nur wie die Geringsen im Lande leben.

Röm.
13, 1-7.

1. Tim.
2, 1-3.

Luf. 22,
25-27.

16. Von der Vermeidung der Rache, von der Wehrlosigkeit und dem Leiden.

Der Herr Jesus spricht: „Ihr habt gehört, daß da gesagt ist: Du sollst deinen Nächsten lieben und deinen Feind hassen; ich aber, sage euch: Liebet eure Feinde, und segnet, die euch fluchen, daß ihr Kinder seid eures Vaters im Himmel.“ So lehrt auch Paulus: „Rächet euch selber nicht, meine Liebsten, sondern gebet Raum dem Zorn. Laß dich nicht das Böse überwinden, sondern überwinde das Böse mit Gutem.“ Daraus ersehen wir, daß uns alle Rache verboten ist; weshalb wir auch keinerlei Waffen gegen unsre Feinde brauchen dürfen. Paulus sagt: „Die Waffen unsrer Ritterschaft sind nicht fleischlich, sondern mächtig vor Gott.“ Da der Herr Jesus dem Petrus befohlen hat, das Schwert in die Scheide zu stecken, dürfen wir's nicht herausziehen, gegen die Feinde uns zu wehren, sondern wollen lieber leiden und dulden. Aber unser Herz und Mund soll ebenfalls nicht Rache üben. Wir wollen dem Lamm nachfolgen, wie in der helfenden und rettenden, so auch in der tragenden und duldenden Liebe. Wir wollen in der Stille segnen, wo man uns wehe tut, eingedenk des Berufes, daß wir den Segen erben sollen.

Matth. 5,
38-48.

Röm. 12,
18-21.

2. Kor. 10,
3. 4.

Matth.
26, 52.

1. Petr. 2,
20-23.

1. Pet.
3 9.

17. Von dem Eidschwören.

Der Herr Jesus spricht: „Ihr habt gehört, daß zu den
 Matth. Alten gesagt ist: „Du sollst keinen falschen Eid tun, sondern
 5, 33=37. sollst Gott deinen Eid halten. Ich aber sage euch, daß ihr aller
 Dinge nicht schwören sollt. Eure Rede aber sei: ja, ja, nein,
 nein, was darüber ist, das ist vom Uebel.“ Diese Worte sind ein
 Verbot jeglichen Eides, wie sich in derselben Weise auch Jakobus
 Jak. ausdrückt. Was aber anstatt des Eides von uns mit „ja“ be-
 5, 12. zeugt wird, das soll auch in der Wahrheit also bestehen. Der
 Lügner Teil aber wird sein in dem Pfuhl, der mit Feuer und
 Offb. Schwefel brennt. Es sind uns aber nicht nur die gerichtlichen
 21, 8. Eidschwüre verboten, sondern wir sollen uns nicht minder alles
 leichtsinnigen Schwörens und des verdammlichen Fluchens ent-
 halten. Jesus sagt: „Die Menschen sollen Rechenschaft geben
 Matth. am jüngsten Gericht von einem jeden unnützen Wort, das sie
 12, 36. geredet haben.“

18. Von der Kirchenzucht oder Absonderung der Unbußfertigen.

Wir lehren, daß nach dem Befehl Christi und seiner Apostel
 eine Kirchenzucht oder Absonderung in der Gemeinde an denen
 geübt werden muß, die in offenbaren Sünden und Lastern le-
 ben. Der Herr Jesus lehrt über die Sünde zwischen Bruder und
 Bruder, daß, wenn der dreimal ermahnte Bruder sich nicht be-
 Matth. fert, er als ein Heide und Zöllner angesehen werden solle. Wenn
 18, 15=17. aber jemand in offenbaren Werken des Fleisches lebt, die nach
 Gal. 5, der Lehre des Apostels Paulus von dem Reiche Gottes aus-
 19=21. schließen, so soll man ihn von der Gemeinde absondern und
 1. Kor. nichts mit ihm zu schaffen haben, auf daß er schamrot werde.
 5, 11. Doch sollen wir ihn nicht als einen Feind halten, sondern ihn
 1. Kor. 6, als einen Bruder ermahnen. Wenn aber der Abgesonderte sei-
 9, 10. ne Sünde bekennt und aufrichtige Früchte der Buße beweist, so
 2. Theff. 3, 14. 15. soll man ihn auf sein Ansuchen mit Zustimmung der Bruder-
 schaft und nach vorhergegangener Verkündigung der Vergebung
 seiner Sünden wieder in die Gemeinde aufnehmen.

19. Von der Auferstehung der Toten.

Die heilige Schrift alten und neuen Testaments lehrt die Auferstehung der Toten. Hiob tröstete sich dieser Auferstehung und sprach: „Ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt, und er wird mich hernach aus der Erde auferwecken.“ Jesaias verkündigt: „Deine Toten werden leben und mit ihrem Leichnam auferstehen.“ Der Herr Jesus lehrt, daß alle, die in den Gräbern sind, die Stimme des Sohnes Gottes hören und hervorgehen werden, die Frommen zur Auferstehung des Lebens, die Bösen zur Auferstehung des Gerichts. Paulus schreibt den Korinthern: „Durch einen Menschen kommt der Tod und durch einen Menschen die Auferstehung der Toten. Denn gleichwie sie in Adam alle sterben, also werden sie in Christo alle lebendig gemacht werden.“ Deshalb glauben und bekennen wir, daß da sein wird die Auferstehung aller Toten durch Jesum Christum.

Hiob 19,
25=27.

Jes.
26, 19.
Joh. 5,
28. 29.

1. Kor. 15,
21. 22

20. Von dem jüngsten Gericht.

Wir glauben und bekennen, daß ein jüngster oder letzter Tag kommen wird, und daß Gott den ganzen Erdkreis richten wird durch seinen Sohn Jesum Christum. Der Herr Jesus wird alsdann sitzen auf dem Stuhl seiner Herrlichkeit. Dann werden durch den Dienst der heiligen Engel alle Völker vor ihm versammelt werden, und er wird sie von einander scheiden, gleichwie ein Hirte die Schafe von den Böcken scheidet. Die Schafe wird er zu seiner Rechten stellen und die Böcke zur Linken. Dann wird er sagen zu denen zu seiner Rechten: Kommt her, ihr Gesegneten meines Vaters, ererbet das Reich, das euch bereitet ist von Anbeginn der Welt. Dann wird er auch sagen zu denen zu seiner Linken: Gehet hin von mir, ihr Verfluchten, in das ewige Feuer, das bereitet ist dem Teufel und seinen Engeln. Und sie werden in die ewige Pein gehen, die Gerechten aber in das ewige Leben.

Apg.
17, 31.
Matth. 25,
31=46.

Kurzgefaßtes

Glaubensbekenntnis

der

N..... Mennoniten-Gemeinde

I.

Von der heiligen Schrift

Die folgenden Glaubensartikel sind mit Ausnahme einiger unwesentlichen Aenderungen und Zusätze eine Verschmelzung der verschiedenen bis dahin in den Mennonitengemeinden Rußlands, Westpreußens und Amerikas in Gebrauch gewesenen Glaubensartikel. Wir haben das von der Verlagsgesellschaft „Raduga“ in Halbstadt, Südrußland, in Verbindung mit dem: Staatschismus herausgegebene Glaubensbekenntnis so passend gefunden, daß wir dasselbe in den meisten Artikeln fast wörtlich kopiert haben. Für die freundliche Erlaubnis, dies zu tun, fühlen wir uns der genannten Gesellschaft gegenüber zu herzlichem Dank verpflichtet. — Die Zusätze stören in keiner Weise unsere Glaubenseinheit, indem sie nur mehr Ergänzungen als eigentliche Aenderungen sind. Möge nun dieses kurze biblische Bekenntnis uns aufs neue ein Sporn sein, unsern Wandel auch demselben gemäß je mehr und mehr biblisch zu führen, so daß Bekenntnis und Wandel nicht zwei verschiedene und getrennte Begriffe seien, sondern daß sie zusammen eine vollkommene Einheit bilden in dem Einen, der auch hierin allein der Weg, die Wahrheit und das Leben ist, und von dem wir immer wieder fest und unerschütterlich glauben und bekennen: Einen andern Grund kann niemand legen außer dem, der gelegt ist, welcher ist Jesus Christus, gestern, heute, und derselbe in alle Ewigkeit.

G. D. Penner,
P. G. Richter.

glauben und bekennen wir, daß sie aus allen Büchern alten und neuen Testaments besteht, und daß sie Gottes Wort ist, denn „die heiligen Menschen Gottes haben geredet, getrieben durch den heiligen Geist.“ 2. Petri 1,21.

Daher ist sie auch die Hauptquelle der Erkenntnis Gottes und die Offenbarung seines heil. Willens. Sie ist das Buch aller Bücher, ein Buch, dem keins auf Erden gleich ist, mehr zum Herzen dringend als Mutterrede, und doch von solcher Geistesiefe, daß auch der Klügste es nicht erschöpft. „Das Wort Gottes ist lebendig und kräftig, und schärfer, denn ein zweischneidig Schwert und durchdringet, bis daß es scheidet Seele und Geist, auch Mark und Bein, und ist ein Richter der Gedanken und Sinne des Herzens.“ Ebr. 4,12.

Da wir nun wissen, daß die heilige Schrift Gottes Wort und die Offenbarung seines heiligen Willens ist, so ist dieses unser Bekenntnis in kurzer Fassung aus derselben entnommen, und muß die heilige Schrift auch die Richtschnur unseres Glaubens und Lebens sein nach Davids Ausspruch: „Dein Wort ist meines Fußes Leuchte und ein Licht auf meinem Wege.“ Ps. 119, 105, und nach Pauli Wort zu Timotheus: „Denn alle Schrift von Gott eingegeben, ist nütze zur Lehre, zur Strafe, zur Besserung, zur Züchtigung in der Gerechtigkeit.“ 2. Tim. 3,16, und unser Heiland nennt diejenigen selig, die Gottes Wort hören und bewahren.“ Luk. 11, 28. Die heil. Schrift ist wahrhaftig; „denn Himmel und Erde werden vergehen, aber meine Worte werden nicht vergehen,“ spricht Christus. Matth. 24, 35.

II.

Von dem dreieinigen Gott

glauben und bekennen wir: Es ist nur ein Gott, der sich uns geoffenbart hat als Vater, Sohn und heiliger Geist. Von Gott dem Vater glauben und bekennen wir, daß er ist ein einziger, ewiger, allmächtiger, allwissender, allgegenwärtiger, heiliger, gerechter, barmherziger und gnädiger Gott, der Schöpfer, Erhalter und Regierer Himmels und der Erde, samt allen sichtbaren Dingen, welcher der Herr aller Herren und König aller Könige ist, und seine Ehre keinem andern noch seinen Ruhm den Götzen lassen will. Er ist allein Gott und niemand mehr; alles muß seinem Befehl gehorsam sein. Tausendmal tausend heiliger Engel dienen ihm und zehntausendmal zehntausend stehen vor ihm. Wenn er spricht, so geschieht es, und wenn er gebietet, so steht es da. Er ist das Licht, nach Joh. 1, 5; und nach 1. Joh. 4, 8 ist er die Liebe.

Von Gott dem Sohne, Jesu Christo, glauben und bekennen wir, daß er ist Gottes eingebornener Sohn, unser Herr, Heiland, Erlöser und Seligmacher, der von Ewigkeit her auf eine unbegreifliche Weise von Gott, seinem Vater, ausgegangen, Micha 5, 1 und aus unergründlicher Liebe zu uns Menschen, als die Zeit erfüllt war, wahrhaftiger Mensch geworden ist, — uns in allem gleich, — ausgenommen die Sünde; der empfangen ist von dem heiligen Geist, geboren von der Jungfrau Maria, gelitten unter Pontio Pilato, gekreuziget, gestorben und begraben; am dritten Tage auferstanden von den Toten, aufgefahren gen Himmel, sitzend zur rechten Hand Gottes, des allmächtigen Vaters, von dannen er kommen wird, zu richten die Lebendigen und die Toten.

Von Gott dem heiligen Geist glauben und bekennen wir, daß er vom Vater ausgeht und vom Sohne gesandt wird, und mit ihnen eines gleichen Wesens ist; daß er noch heute wie bei der Schöpfung und zur Zeit der Apostel fort und fort auf Erden wirkt, und daß wir ohne ihn Jesum Christum nicht erkennen können als unsern Heiland, Erlöser und Seligmacher.

Wie wohl nun Gott, der Schöpfer aller Dinge, sich also auf dreierlei Weise geoffenbart hat, so bekennen wir doch den dreieinigen Gott, Vater, Sohn und heiligen Geist, als einen einigen wahren Gott, wenn wir von ihm reden als von dem Schöpfer, Erhalter und Regierer der Welt, als von dem Mensch gewordenen Erlöser der Menschheit und als von dem heiligen Geiste, der in uns Wohnung machen will, um uns wieder in die Gemeinschaft mit Gott und zu seinen Kindern zu erheben.

III.

Von der Schöpfung, Erhaltung und Regierung durch den dreieinigen Gott

glauben und bekennen wir, daß dieser Gott, Vater, Sohn und heiliger Geist, der allmächtige Schöpfer Himmels und der Erde ist, der im Anfang gemacht hat den Himmel, die Erde und das Meer und alles, was darinnen ist, und zwar durch Jesum Christum nach Eph. 3, 9 und daß dieser Gott alle Dinge nach seiner Macht und Weisheit, Gerechtigkeit und Güte erhält, lenkt und regiert, so daß ohne die göttliche Vorsehung und Zulassung nichts geschieht, so gering es auch scheinen mag; denn Christus spricht in Luk. 12, 6. 7: „Verkauft man nicht fünf Sperlinge um zwei Pfennige? Noch ist vor Gott derselben nicht einer vergessen. Auch sind die

Haare auf eurem Haupt alle gezählt. Darum fürchtet euch nicht; denn ihr seid besser als viele Sperlinge.“ Auch sagt der Prophet Amos schon im alten Bunde: „Ist auch ein Unglück in der Stadt, das der Herr nicht tue?“ Amos 3, 6.

IV.

Von der Sündhaftigkeit des Menschen und der Erlösung durch Jesum Christum

glauben und bekennen wir, daß Gott die ersten Menschen nach seinem Bilde und daher vollkommen und ohne Sünde erschaffen hat in rechtschaffener Gerechtigkeit und Heiligkeit. — In diesem glückseligen Zustande sind die ersten Menschen aber nicht geblieben, sondern sie übertraten das Gebot Gottes auf Versuchung des Teufels, und sind dadurch samt allen ihren Nachkommen in Sünde und Tod gefallen. „Denn durch einen Menschen ist die Sünde in die Welt gekommen und der Tod durch die Sünde, und ist also der Tod zu allen Menschen hindurch gedrungen, die weil sie alle gesündigt haben.“ Röm. 5, 12.

Aber wir glauben und bekennen auch, daß Gott in seiner unergründlichen Liebe und Gnade uns Menschen in der Sünde nicht hat wollen verderben lassen, sondern uns durch die Menschwerdung, durch das Leben, Leiden, Sterben, die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt seines Sohnes erlöst hat, sofern wir den Heiland als unsern Erlöser und Seligmacher durch den wahren Glauben, welcher in der Liebe tätig ist, annehmen und bekennen. Und diese Erlösung ist eine vollkommene, so daß wir in Christo jetzt schon vor dem Vater vollkommen sind, Kol. 2, 10, und in der Vollendung dereinst ihm gleich sein werden. 1. Joh. 3, 2.

V.

Vom freien Willen

glauben und bekennen wir, daß der Mensch einen freien Willen hat, sich zu wählen das Gute oder das Böse, den Tod oder das Leben, 5. Mos. 30, 19. Die Gnadentwirkungen des heiligen Geistes wirken in dem Menschen nur so weit, als der Mensch seinen Willen Gott zur Bekehrung übergibt, damit ihm die Kraft zum Guten, das Wollen und Vollbringen geschenkt werde. Der allmächtige Gott zwingt niemand, bestimmt auch keinen durch unbedingte Gnadenwahl, sondern läßt uns unseren freien Willen. Gott der Herr kommt beständig mit seiner Gnade uns zuvor, reizt und zieht uns zur Bekehrung, zwingt uns aber nicht. Er läßt uns die Freiheit, ob wir bei ihm bleiben oder von ihm weichen wollen. Hes. 18, 24 und Ebr. 6, 5. 6. — Aber Gott will nicht, daß jemand verloren werde, sondern daß sich ein jeglicher zu ihm bekehre und selig werde, Hes. 33.

VI.

Von der Rechtfertigung durch den Glauben

glauben und bekennen wir, daß es nicht genug sei, eine geschichtliche Kenntnis der Wahrheit in Bezug auf Christum zu haben, derselben beizupflichten und mit dem Munde zu bekennen; denn solches alles kann stattfinden, ohne daß das Herz erfaßt, gereinigt und erneuert wird, sondern daß der wahre Glaube ein in der menschlichen Seele von Gott gewirktes Licht ist, das uns den verderbten Zustand unseres Herzens erkennen und in Christo, dem geoffenbarten Gottesohne, Hilfe, Heil und Frieden suchen lehrt. „Der Glaube ist eine gewisse Zu-

versicht des, das man hoffet, und nicht zweifelt an dem, das man nicht siehet." Ebr. 11, 1. Er besteht in der gläubigen Ergreifung und Aneignung Jesu Christi, als des alleinigen Retters von Sünde und Tod, der uns von Gott gemacht ist zur Weisheit und zur Gerechtigkeit, zur Heiligung und zur Erlösung; „denn es ist in keinem andern Heil, ist auch kein anderer Name den Menschen gegeben, darinnen wir sollen selig werden." Ap. Gesch. 4, 12. Der Glaube aber muß mit herzlicher Buße verbunden sein, weshalb der Heiland auch sagte: „Tut Buße und glaubet an das Evangelium." Ohne Buße kein wahrer Glaube. Die Buße zusammen mit dem Glauben aber bildet die Befeh- rung. Wer Buße tut und im Glauben Christi Verdienst ergreift, der bekehrt sich. — Von dem Glauben sagt der Apostel Johannes. „Unser Glaube ist der Sieg, der die Welt überwindet hat. Wer ist aber, der die Welt überwindet, ohne der da glaubet, daß Jesus Gottes Sohn ist?" 1. Joh. 5, 4, 5.

Durch solchen Glauben erlangen wir die Rechtfertigung vor Gott. Denn um des stellvertretenden Leidens seines Sohnes Jesu Christi willen spricht Gott den bußfertigen Sünder, der Christum im Glauben als seinen Heiland annimmt, und gleichsam nur in ihm und durch ihn lebt, von Schuld und Strafe frei, und rechnet ihm Christi Verdienst und Gerechtigkeit als eigen zu, so daß er also im göttlichen Gericht aus freier Gnade gerecht, und Erbe des ewigen Lebens wird. Einer solchen Rechtfertigung bedürfen wir alle: „denn wir sind allzumal Sünder und mangeln des Ruhms, den wir an Gott haben sollten." Röm. 3, 23. Aber wir bekennen auch mit Paulo: „Wie nun durch Eines (Menschen) Sünde die Verdammnis über alle Menschen gekommen ist, also ist auch durch Eines Gerechtigkeit die Rechtfertigung des Lebens über alle Menschen gekommen." Röm. 5, 18. Niemand wird durch seine eigenen Werke vor Gott gerecht, sondern es ist Gottes Werk, daß er dem gläubigen und bußfertigen Menschen um des Verdienstes Jesu Christi unsers Heilandes und Erlösers willen alle seine Sünden aus Gnaden vergibt. „Er hat den, der von keiner Sünde wußte, für uns zur Sünde gemacht, auf daß wir würden in ihm die Gerechtigkeit, die vor Gott gilt." 2. Kor. 5, 21.

Diese Gnade Gottes, daß er uns todeswürdigen Sündern die Gerechtigkeit Jesu Christi seines Sohnes, aus Gnaden zurechnen will, so wir an ihn glauben, erhebt und erweckt unser Herz zur größten Dankbarkeit und Gegenliebe, und solche Liebe treibt denn auch zu allem guten Werk. „Wenn wir von der Sünde frei und Gottes Anechte sind, so haben wir die Frucht, daß wir heilig werden. Das Ende aber ist das ewige Leben." Röm. 6, 22.

VII.

Von der Wiedergeburt

glauben und bekennen wir, daß, weil ein jeder Mensch von Natur zum Bösen geneigt, und alles, was vom Fleisch geboren wird, auch fleischlich gesinnt ist, wir neugeboren werden müssen, wenn wir in das Reich Gottes eingehen wollen. Diese Wiedergeburt ist eigentlich die Erneuerung des Ebenbildes Gottes im Menschen, eine Veränderung des Herzens aus einem fleischlichen zu einem geistlichen Sinn, eine Kreuzigung und Tötung der Lüste und Begierden des Fleisches und eine völlige Uebergabe des Herzens an Gott.

Es wird aber die Wiedergeburt von Gott in uns gewirkt, wie Petrus lehrt, daß Gott nach

seiner großen Barmherzigkeit uns wiedergeboren hat zu einer lebendigen Hoffnung. 1 Petri 1, 3. Die Mittel aber, wodurch sie gewirkt wird, sind das Wort Gottes und der heilige Geist. Jakobus spricht: „Er hat uns gezeugt nach seinem Willen durch das Wort der Wahrheit, daß wir würden Erstlinge seiner Kreaturen". Jak. 1, 18. Und Jesus spricht: „Es sei denn, daß jemand geboren werde aus dem Wasser und Geist, so kann er nicht in das Reich Gottes kommen." Joh. 3, 5. Wir werden also wiedergeboren durch das lebendige Wort Gottes, 1 Petri 1, 23, und durch den heiligen Geist. Joh. 3.

Durch diese Wiedergeburt wird man geschickt, in guten Werken zu wandeln. Ephes. 2, 10; denn man wird dadurch himmlisch gesinnt, und der göttlichen Natur theilhaftig, daß man die guten Werke ohne allen Zwang mit Lust und Liebe übt, und freiwillig nach Gottes Wohlgefallen lebt, und würdiglich wandelt dem Herrn zu allem Gefallen, fruchtbar in allen guten Werken, Kol. 1, 10. — Menno Simons schreibt davon: „Was ist die Wiedergeburt anders, denn die Veränderung und Erneuerung des Menschen, welche Gott in ihm wirkt durch den Glauben an Christum Jesum in der Kraft des heiligen Geistes; also, daß der Mensch wird aus Gott geschaffen, aus seinem Samen geboren, nach seinem Bilde gemacht, zu seiner Erkenntnis erneuert, seiner göttlichen Natur theilhaftig wird, und von seinem Geiste empfähet, um Gott zu dienen in Heiligkeit und Gerechtigkeit, in einem neuen Wesen des Geistes sein Leben lang. Wo dieses geschieht und im Vorausangeht, da ist die rechte Wiedergeburt, da ist die neue Kreatur in Christo Jesu." Diese Wiedergeburt wirkt in uns dann das beständige Streben nach Heiligung, aus welcher denn zuletzt die herrliche Vollendung eines Christen hervorgeht, so daß Christus in uns nicht nur eine Gestalt gewinnt, sondern wir auch hinarbeiten zum vollkommenen Mannesalter in ihm; und daß es von uns in Wahrheit heißen kann: „Ihr in mir, und ich in euch." Joh. 15, 4.

VIII.

Von der Gemeinde Gottes

glauben und bekennen wir, daß sie von Christus selbst gestiftet ist, und daß sie aus solchen Gliedern besteht, die durch den wahren Glauben an ihn und im Gehorsam gegen das heilige Evangelium von der sündigen Welt abgetreten sind und ihre Gemeinschaft haben durch den heiligen Geist mit Gott, dem Vater, und Jesu Christo, dem Haupt der Gemeinde. Und obwohl diese Gemeinde in der ganzen Welt zerstreut ist, so bekennen sich die Mitglieder derselben doch als Glieder eines Leibes, dessen Haupt Christus ist. Wenn gleich nicht alle, welche sich zur Gemeinde Gottes bekennen, wahre Glieder des Leibes Christi sind, soll uns dies nicht nutzlos machen, sondern vielmehr antreiben, mitzuhelfen, daß alle gewonnen werden, am meisten aber, daß wir selbst wahre Glieder Jesu Christi und Mitglieder der unsichtbaren Gemeinde der Heiligen seien und bleiben mögen. Darum halten wir es auch für unsere christliche Pflicht, miteinander zusammenzukommen, das Wort Gottes zu predigen und dasselbe anzuhören, weil der Herr Jesus verheißt: „Wo zwei oder drei in meinem Namen versammelt sind, da bin ich mitten unter ihnen." Matth. 18, 20. Und der Apostel ermahnt, daß wir unsere Versammlungen nicht verlassen sollen. Ebr. 10, 25. Und anderseits halten wir uns auch verpflichtet, dafür zu

arbeiten, daß die frohe Botschaft auch hinausgetragen werde zu den nichtchristlichen Völkern, damit auch dort Glieder für die Gemeinde Gottes gewonnen werden, gemäß dem Befehle des Herrn Jesu: „Gehet hin in alle Welt und lehret alle Völker und taufet sie im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des heiligen Geistes; und lehret sie halten alles, was ich euch befohlen habe.“ Matth. 28, 19 u. 20.

IX.

Von dem Amt der Ältesten, Prediger und Diakonen in der Gemeinde

glauben und bekennen wir nach der Lehre Christi und seiner Apostel, daß Gott seiner Gemeinde die Macht gegeben hat, Männer zu berufen, denen es als Haushalter der mancherlei Gaben Gottes obliegt, das Wort Gottes zu predigen, die heilige Wassertaufe zu vollziehen, das heilige Abendmahl auszuteilen und die brüderlichen Beratungen zu leiten, damit hierdurch der Leib Christi erbaut und unterhalten werde.

Darum glauben wir, daß das Amt des Dienstes in der Gemeinde eine göttliche Ordnung ist, welche nach dem Vorbilde der Apostel unterhalten werden soll. Die Gemeinde hat sich nach solchen Männern umzusehen, die voll heiligen Geistes sind, die ein gutes Zeugnis und solche Eigenschaften haben, wie sie in 1. Tim. 3, Titus 1 und 1. Petri 5 gefordert werden, und hat die Erwählung der Ältesten und der Lehrer nach dem Vorbilde zu geschehen, wie es uns in der Apostelgeschichte gegeben ist.—

Auch halten wir an der Ordnung der Apostel fest, daß neben den Ältesten und Predigern oder Evangelisten auch Diakonen oder Almosenpfleger in der Gemeinde bestellt werden, welche die Armen durch Almosen, die von milden Herzen beige-steuert werden, unterstützen, die Notdurft der Gemeindeglieder erfüllen, Barmherzigkeit üben mit Lust, auch sonst hilfreiche Hand in dem Dienst der Gemeinde bieten, damit dieselbe wohl regiert werde. Ap. Gesch. 6. Der Zweck dieser Ämter ist nach Eph. 4, 12 ff, daß die Heiligen zugerichtet werden zum Werk des Amtes, dadurch der Leib Christi erbaut werde.

X.

Von der heiligen Taufe

glauben und bekennen wir, daß sie eine heilige Ordnung Jesu Christi ist, welcher nach Matth. 28, 19 u. 20 befohlen hat: „Gehet hin in alle Welt, lehret alle Völker, und taufet sie im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des heiligen Geistes;“ und Markus 16 spricht er: „Wer da glaubet und getauft wird, der wird selig werden, wer aber nicht glaubt, der wird verdammet werden.“ Diesen Befehl des Herrn haben die Apostel treu befolgt, die Buße zu Gott und den Glauben an Jesum gepredigt und diejenigen, die das Wort Gottes gern annahmen, sind dann nach Bezeugung ihres Glaubens getauft worden. Darum taufen wir auch nur solche Personen, die den Glauben an den Dreieinigen Gott selbst bekennen; denn ein Befehl, andere Personen zu taufen, ist in der ganzen heiligen Schrift alten und neuen Testaments, welche wir als einzige Quelle wahrer christlicher Erkenntnis und göttlicher Offenbarung ansehen, nicht ausgesprochen.

Die christliche Wassertaufe bezeichnet den wahren Gläubigen die Abwaschung der sündlichen Unreinigkeit der Seelen durch das vergossene Blut Jesu Christi, nämlich: Vergebung der

Sünden durch Christum Jesum, welchen sie in der Taufe angezogen haben. Gal. 3, 27. Sie ist eine Einverleibung in Christum und in seine Gemeinde und der Bund eines guten Gewissens mit Gott. Sie bezeugt das Gestorbensein mit Christo und das Begrabensein unseres alten Menschen in Christi Tod und verpflichtet die Getauften, sich mit Christo zu einem neuen, gehorsamen Leben und Wandel zu verbinden, nachzufolgen seinen Fußstapfen und zu tun, was er ihnen befohlen hat.

Hat Jesus Christus selbst, der ohne Sünde war, sich taufen lassen im Gehorsam gegen seinen himmlischen Vater und um alle Gerechtigkeit zu erfüllen, so verlangt er vielmehr von uns, die wir in Sünden empfangen und geboren sind, daß wir dieses Bundeszeichen an uns vollziehen lassen, und hat daran geknüpft die Verriegelung mit dem heiligen Geiste, als der rechten Feuer- und Geistestaufe. Wer aber dieses Gebot Christi aus Eigendünkel verachtet und unterläßt, der handelt wider seinen Willen und kann in Wahrheit nicht sein Jünger sein.*

*Die *Kindereinssegnung* halten wir nach Markus 10, 13—16, für eine löbliche und segensreiche, von dem Herrn Jesu selbst geübte und empfohlene Einrichtung, wodurch die Kinder öffentlich und feierlich dem Vater im Himmel geweiht und der in besonderen Fällen (Tod, Armut oder Unvermögen der Eltern) notwendig werdenden Fürsorge der Gemeinde anbefohlen werden. Diese kirchliche Einssegnung sichert den Kindern alle äußerlichen Segnungen einer christlichen Gemeindeerziehung und Versorgung, bis sie durch freien Selbstentschluß sich später der Gemeinde durch die heilige Taufe anschließen und hierdurch dann zur vollen geistlichen Mitgliedschaft und deren Segnungen gelangen.

XI.

Vom heiligen Abendmahl

glauben und bekennen wir, daß der Herr Jesus diese heilige Handlung selbst eingesetzt und seinen Gläubigen zu unterhalten befohlen hat. Denn nach dem Essen des Osterlammes in der Nacht, da er verraten ward, nahm er das Brot, dankte, brach's und gab es seinen Jüngern und sprach: „Nehmet, esset, das ist mein Leib, der für euch gegeben wird; solches tut zu meinem Gedächtnis.“ Desselbengleichen auch den Kelch nach dem Abendmahle, dankte und gab ihn seinen Jüngern und sprach: „Dieser Kelch ist das neue Testament in meinem Blute; solches tut, so oft ihr's trinket, zu meinem Gedächtnis.“ 1. Kor. 11, 23—25.

Daß diese heilige Handlung aber oft und bis ans Ende der Tage von uns unterhalten werden soll, lehren uns die angeführten Worte unseres Heilandes: „Solches tut zu meinem Gedächtnis,“ und die Worte des Apostels Paulus: „So oft ihr von diesem Brode esset, oder von diesem Kelche trinket, sollt ihr des Herrn Tod verkündigen, bis daß er kommt.“ 1. Kor. 11.

Von dem Segen in dem Genuße des heiligen Abendmahls aber glauben und bekennen wir, daß, gleichwie Christi heiliger Leib am Stamme des Kreuzes gebrochen, und sein heiliges teures Blut geflossen ist zur Vergebung unserer Sünden, so ist der würdige glaubensvolle Genuß des heiligen Abendmahls uns ein anschaulicher Beweis und eine kräftige Versicherung unserer Veröhnung mit Gott und der Vergebung unserer Sünden. — Und dann, gleichwie Brot und Wein zur Nahrung des Leibes dienen, also werden unsere Seelen durch den Leib und das Blut Christi ernährt, gespeist und zum ewigen Leben erhalten. Darum müssen wir auch kein Vertrauen auf die äußerlichen Zeichen, sondern

vielmehr auf das wahre Wesen selbst setzen; denn äußerlich mit dem Munde genießen wir nichts anderes, denn natürlich Brot und Wein, aber inwendig in der Seele durch den Glauben den wahren Leib und das wahre Blut Jesu Christi.

Nur wahrhaft Gläubigen und Bußfertigen, die ein ernstes Verlangen in sich tragen, mit ihrem Herrn und Heilande Jesu Christo im Glauben und in der Liebe sich aufs neue zu vereinigen, so wie in herzlicher Liebe auch denen zu vergeben, die sich an ihnen versündigt haben, und nach Röm. 12, 18 mit der Gemeinde und allen Menschen, soviel an ihnen ist, in Frieden leben, kann das Mahl des Herrn wirklich gesegnet sein. Darum ist nach 1. Kor. 11, 27—29 eine vorherige, ernste Selbstprüfung erforderlich, wenn wir nicht einem Gerichte Gottes verfallen wollen.

XII.

Vom christlichen Ehestande

glauben und bekennen wir, daß derselbe von Gott im Paradiese an Adam und Eva eingesetzt ist, daß Mann und Weib einander Gehilfen seien zur Seligkeit. Gott hat ihn aber dergestalt eingesetzt, daß ein Mann und ein Weib in der Ehe sein sollen. Diesen Ehestand hat auch Jesus Christus bestätigt, wenn er nach Matth. 19, 4. 5. sagt: „Der den Menschen am Anfang gemacht hat, der machte, daß ein Mann und ein Weib sein sollte und sprach: „Darum wird ein Mensch seinen Vater und seine Mutter verlassen und an seinem Weibe hängen, und werden die zwei ein Fleisch sein.“ — Von solchen Personen, die in den Stand der heiligen Ehe treten, verlangt Gottes Wort, daß sie frei seien von ehelichen Gelübden dritten gegenüber, daß sie nicht zu nahe in Blutsverwandtschaft mit einander stehen und daß ihre Heirat im Herrn geschehe, 3 Mos. 18 u. 20, 1. Kor. 7, 39. Der Ehestand ist ein heiliger Stand; darum soll die Ehe nach christlicher Weise und in christlicher Ordnung geschlossen werden: auch sollen die Eheleute heilig, züchtig und ehrbar miteinander leben, und nicht von einander geschieden werden, wie vormalig unter dem Geseß; denn Christus sagt: „Was Gott zusammengefügt hat, das soll der Mensch nicht scheiden,“ Matth. 19, 6; und ferner B. 9: „Wer sich von seinem Weibe scheidet, (es sei denn um der Hurerei willen) und freiet eine andere, der bricht die Ehe, und wer die Abgeschiedene freiet, der bricht auch die Ehe.“

Außerhalb unserer Gemeinschaft zu heiraten, halten wir nicht für ratsam. Im Gegenteil, wir halten es für unsere Pflicht, ernstlich davor zu warnen, weil dadurch mancherlei unangenehme und oft schwierige Folgen entstehen, namentlich bei der Erziehung der Kinder, beim Besuch des Gottesdienstes, bei der Abendmahlsfeier usw. Wenn aber, wie ja das bei unserm geschwisterlichen Verkehr mit andern christgläubigen Gemeinschaften nicht immer verhütet werden kann, solche Eheschließungen vorkommen, so empfehlen und wünschen wir, daß die Betroffenen sich sobald wie möglich einer und derselben Gemeinde anschließen, um in diesem wichtigen und heiligen Stande bessere Selbst- und auch gedeihlichere Kindererziehung üben zu können.

XIII.

Von dem Amt der Obrigkeit

glauben und bekennen wir, daß sie eine göttliche Ordnung ist, der wir gehorsam und untertan sein sollen in allen Dingen, die nicht streiten wi-

der Gottes Wort. Denn der Apostel Paulus spricht zu den Römern Kap. 13: „Jedermann sei untertan der Obrigkeit, die Gewalt über ihn hat; denn es ist keine Obrigkeit ohne von Gott verordnet. Wer sich nun wider die Obrigkeit setzt, der widerstrebet Gottes Ordnung; die aber widerstreben, werden über sich ein Urteil empfangen. Denn die Gewaltigen sind nicht den guten Werken, sondern den bösen zu fürchten.“ Und Petrus sagt 1. Petri 2, 13. 14: „Seid untertan aller menschlichen Ordnung um des Herrn willen, es sei dem König als dem Obersten, oder den Hauptleuten als den Gesandten von ihm zur Rache über die Uebelthäter und zu Lob der Frommen.“ Auch sind wir schuldig, für sie zu beten nach dem Befehl des Apostels Paulus, wenn er an Timotheum schreibt: „So ermahne ich nun, daß man vor allen Dingen zuerst tue Bitte, Gebet, Fürbitte und Danksagung für alle Menschen, für die Könige und für alle Obrigkeit, auf daß wir ein ruhiges Leben führen mögen in aller Gottseligkeit und Ehrbarkeit.“ 1. Tim. 2, 1. 2.*

XIV

Vom Eidschwur

glauben und bekennen wir, daß den Vätern des alten Bundes zugelassen war, in dem Namen

* Inwiefern der einzelne Christ selbst ein Träger der Obrigkeit (also ein Staatsbeamter) werden darf, muß von seiner Berufsneigung und von seinem persönlich religiösen Standpunkt aus entschieden werden. Wir halten die Uebernahme eines obrigkeitlichen Amtes nicht für ein Unrecht, noch viel weniger für eine Sünde, da nach den klarsten Aussprüchen der hl. Schrift solches Amt nicht nur von Gott zugelassen, sondern eingesetzt und verordnet ist.

des Herrn zu schwören und dabei befohlen, keinen falschen Eid zu tun; aber der Stifter des neuen Bundes, Jesus Christus, fordert nach Matth. 5, 33—37 ausdrücklich jedes Schwören zu meiden, wenn er dort spricht: „Ihr habt gehört, daß zu den Alten gesagt ist: Du sollst keinen falschen Eid tun, sondern sollst Gott deinen Eid halten. Ich aber sage euch, daß ihr allerdings nicht schwören sollt, weder bei dem Himmel, denn er ist Gottes Thron, noch bei der Erde, denn sie ist seiner Füße Schemel, noch bei Jerusalem, denn sie ist eines großen Königs Stadt. Auch sollst du nicht bei deinem Haupte schwören, denn du vermagst nicht ein einziges Haar weiß oder schwarz zu machen. Eure Rede sei: Ja, ja; nein, nein; was darüber ist, das ist vom Uebel.“ Aus diesen Worten unsers Herrn Jesu erkennen wir aufs deutlichste, daß nicht nur das leichtsinnige Schwören im gewöhnlichen Leben, sondern jegliches Eidschwören, welche Formel es auch haben mag, verboten ist; was auch durch den Apostel bestätigt wird. Gal. 5, 12. Was aber von uns anstatt des Eides mit einem gewissenhaften „Ja“ oder „Nein“ bezeugt wird, soll auch in Wahrheit also bestehen. Wir sollen stets und überall die Wahrheit sprechen und die Lüge verabscheuen, damit wir nicht dem schrecklichen Urteil verfallen, das den Lügner in Offenbarung Kap. 21, 8 zuerkannt wird. Niemand möge denken, daß nur die gerichtlichen Eidschwüre verboten sind, vielmehr sollen wir uns jeglichen Schwörens und Fluchens enthalten um der Seelen Seligkeit willen, denn Jesus sagt Matth. 12, 36: „Die Menschen müssen Rechenschaft geben am jüngsten Gericht von einem jeglichen unnützen Wort, das sie geredet haben.“

XV.

Von der Feindesliebe und der Rache

glauben und bekennen wir, daß Christen, als der Welt abgestorbene und aus Gott geborene Menschen, in der Welt keine Rache üben, nach der Lehre Jesu, ihres Meisters, wie er hiervon in Matth. 5, 38. 39 selber spricht: „Ihr habt gehört, daß zu den Alten gesagt ist: Auge um Auge, Zahn um Zahn: Ich aber sage euch, daß ihr nicht widerstreben sollt dem Uebel, sondern so dir jemand einen Streich gibt auf deinen rechten Backen, dem biete den andern auch dar.“ Und der Apostel Paulus ermahnt die Römer Kap. 12, 18—21: „Ist es möglich, so viel an euch ist, so habt mit allen Menschen Frieden. Rächet euch selber nicht, meine Liebsten, sondern gebet Raum dem Zorn, denn es steht geschrieben: die Rache ist mein, ich will vergelten, spricht der Herr. So nun deinen Feind hungert, so speise ihn, dürstet ihn, so tränke ihn. Wenn du das tust, so wirst du feurige Kohlen auf sein Haupt sammeln. Laß dich nicht das Böse überwinden, sondern überwinde das Böse mit Gutem.“ Dies fordert auch Petrus von den wahren Christen, wenn es 1. Petri 3, 9 heißt: „Vergeltet nicht Böses mit Bösem, oder Scheltworte mit Scheltworten, sondern dagegen segnet,“ — und derselbe Apostel weist uns auf das Beispiel des segnenden Christus hin, „welcher nicht schalt, da er gescholten ward, nicht drohete, da er litte; er stellte es aber dem anheim, der da recht richtet.“ 1. Petri 2, 23. Diese Anordnungen der heiligen Schrift neuen Testaments zeugen ausdrücklich, daß wir an unserm Nächsten in keinem Falle Rache nehmen dürfen, weder in Gedanken, noch in Worten und Werken, sondern wir sollen lieber Unrecht leiden als Unrecht tun, und so uns solches widerfährt, mit Wohltun unserm Nächsten entgegen treten, dann werden wir Kinder sein unsers Vaters im Himmel. Daraus folgt, daß wir uns eines jeden feindseligen Streites mit dem Nächsten sorgfältig zu enthalten haben, und daß auch für uns das Töten von Menschen im Kriege unzulässig ist; denn die Waffen unserer Mitterschaft sind nicht fleischlich, sondern mächtig vor Gott, 2. Kor. 10, 4; und wir streben durch unser christliches Bekenntnis von der Verwerflichkeit des Krieges und der Rache nach dem im Wort der Weissagung angekündigten Friedensreiche, wo man die Schwerter zu Pflugscharen und die Spieße zu Sicheln machen und nicht mehr kriegen lernen wird.

XVI.

Von der christlichen Gemeindegucht

glauben und bekennen wir, daß nach dem Befehl Jesu und der Lehre seiner Apostel solche Glieder in der Gemeinde, welche in groben Sünden und Werken des Fleisches leben, einer Gemeindegucht zu unterwerfen sind. Hiervon lehrt der Heiland nach Matth. 18, 15—17: „Sündiget aber dein Bruder an dir, so gehe hin und strafe ihn zwischen dir und ihm allein. Höret er dich, so hast du deinen Bruder gewonnen. Höret er dich nicht, so nimm noch einen oder zwei zu dir, auf daß alle Sache bestehe auf zweier oder dreier Zeugen Mund; höret er die nicht, so sage es der Gemeinde. Höret er die Gemeinde nicht, so halte ihn als einen Heiden und Zöllner.“ Gilt dieses schon, wenn ein Bruder gegen den andern sich versündigt hat, so ist eine Anwendung der Gemeindegucht um so notwendiger, wenn es sich um grobe, öffentlich Mergernis erregende, überhaupt um solche Sünden handelt, die nach Pauli

Lehre von dem Reiche Gottes ausschließen. Gal. 5, 19—21.

In diesen Fällen ist entweder eine sofortige Absonderung von der Gemeinde erforderlich, wie wir aus Pauli Worten an die Gemeinde zu Korinth ersehen, da er dieselbe schalt, daß sie einen Blutschänder nicht von sich getan hatte. „Tut von euch selbst hinaus,“ sagt er, „wer böse ist.“ 1. Kor. 5, 13, und 2. 7 sagt er: „Wisset ihr nicht, daß ein wenig Sauerteig den ganzen Teig durchsäuert? Darum seget den alten Sauerteig aus, auf daß ihr ein neuer Teig seid, gleichwie ihr ungesäuert seid,“ oder wenn bei dem Betreffenden aufrichtige Reue wahrzunehmen ist, so soll doch wenigstens eine Wortstrafe vor versammelter Gemeinde geschehen nach dem Wort Pauli an den Timotheus: „Die da sündigen, strafe vor allen, auf daß die andern sich auch fürchten.“ 1. Tim. 5, 20. Mit der Absonderung ist die Meidung der Gestraften verbunden nach 1. Kor. 5 und 2. Thessal. 3. — Jedoch sollen wir uns hüten, daß unter dem Schein der Meidung sich Haß und Feindschaft einschleiche, denn es heißt ferner: „Doch haltet ihn nicht für einen Feind, sondern ermahnet ihn als einen Bruder.“ 2. Thess. 3, 15. Wenn ein abgesondertes Mitglied aber seine begangene Sünde erkennt, bekennet und rechtchaffene Früchte der Buße beweist, dann halten wir es für unsere christliche Pflicht, dasselbe wieder in unsere Gemeinschaft aufzunehmen, wie Paulus dies ausdrücklich den Korinthern gebietet. 2. Kor. 2, 6—10.

XVII.

Von dem Tode und dem Zustande der Seele im Totenreich

glauben und bekennen wir, daß dem Menschen gesetzt ist, einmal zu sterben, Ebr. 9, 27, und daß dies eine Folge des Ungehorsams unserer ersten Eltern und unserer eigenen Sünde ist, 1. Mose 2, 17 und Römer 5, 12. Zugleich aber glauben wir, daß durch den Gehorsam und den Tod Jesu Christi für alle, die wahrhaft an ihn glauben, der Stachel des Todes genommen worden ist, 1. Kor. 15, 55—57, und daß diese den Tod nicht zu fürchten brauchen, sondern Gott durch Jesum Christum danken können, daß sie einmal sterben dürfen. Was unsern unsterblichen Geist betrifft, so glauben wir, daß derselbe unmittelbar nach der Entbindung vom Leibe in das Totenreich versetzt wird, Luk. 16, 22—24. Die Seelen der Unbekehrten gehen dann über in einen Zustand der Gefangenschaft und werden dort behalten bis zum Tage des Gerichts, 2. Petri 2, 4. 9. Die in dem Herrn sterben werden in einen Zustand des Trostes, des Friedens und der Glückseligkeit versetzt, Luk. 16, 25 und Luk. 23, 43, und sie dürfen sich freuen auf ihre endliche Verherrlichung und Vollendung durch Christum, Matth. 25, 34 und Joh. 17, 24. Es ist also der Zustand zwischen dem Tode und der Auferstehung nicht ein solcher der Bewußtlosigkeit oder des Seelenschlafs, sondern der Ruhe und Freude oder der Unruhe und Pein, so daß die abgeschiedenen Seelen miteinander reden können, wie der reiche Mann mit Abraham, und hören können, wie die ungläubigen Zeitgenossen Noahs die Predigt Christi, 1. Petri 3, 19.

XVIII.

Von der Auferstehung der Toten

glauben und bekennen wir, daß alle Menschen, die gestorben sind, oder noch künftig sterben werden, dereinst wieder leben und vom Tode auferstehen werden; wie solches aus den Schriften des Alten und Neuen Testaments erhellt; denn dieses sündliche Fleisch und Blut kann das Reich Gottes nicht ererben, nach 1. Kor. 15, 50; es muß erst als ein Weizenkörnlein in die Erde gesät werden. Von dieser Auferstehung der Toten, beide der Frommen und der Gottlosen, der Gerechten und Ungerechten, sagt der Herr Jesus, in Joh. 5, 28. 29: „Es kommt die Stunde, in welcher alle, die in den Gräbern sind, werden seine Stimme hören; und werden hervorgehen, die da Gutes getan haben, zur Auferstehung des Lebens, die aber Uebels getan haben, zur Auferstehung des Gerichts.“ — Viele, die unter der Erde schlafen liegen, werden aufwachen, etliche zum ewigen Leben, etliche zur ewigen Schmach und Schande. Daniel 12, 2. — Der Apostel Paulus sagt 1. Thess. 4, 16. 17 daß, wenn der Herr Jesus mit einem Feldgeschrei und der Stimme des Erzengels, und mit der Posaune Gottes herniederkommen wird vom Himmel, dann die Toten in Christo zuerst auferstehen werden. Darnach wir, die wir leben und übrig bleiben, werden zugleich mit denselben hingerückt werden in den Wolken, dem Herrn entgegen in der Luft, und werden also bei dem Herrn sein allezeit. Dieses ist die erste Auferstehung, die bei der zunächst zu erwartenden Wiederkunft des Herrn sich vollzieht, während die allgemeine Auferstehung am Ende der Tage erfolgt. Auf die Auferstehung hat sich der fromme Hiob in seinem Leiden gefreut, wenn er Kapitel 19, 23 spricht: „Ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt, und wird mich hernach aus der Erde auferwecken.“ —

„Wir wissen,“ spricht Paulus 2. Kor. 4, 14, „daß der, der den Herrn Jesum auferweckt hat, uns auch auferwecken wird durch Jesum,“ und in 1. Thess. 4 spricht er: „Wir wollen euch, liebe Brüder, nicht verhalten von denen, die da schlafen, auf daß ihr nicht traurig seid, wie die anderen, die keine Hoffnung haben. Denn so wir glauben, daß Jesus gestorben und auferstanden ist, also wird Gott auch, die da entschlafen sind durch Jesum, mit ihm führen.“

XIX.

Von dem jüngsten Gericht

glauben und bekennen wir, daß dasselbe am Ende der Tage unfehlbar kommen wird. Es wird alsdann der Sohn Gottes sitzen auf dem Stuhl seiner Herrlichkeit und werden vor ihm alle Völker versammelt werden, um Rechenschaft abzulegen von allem Tun und Lassen auf Erden in Gedanken, Worten und Werken, und wird sie von einander scheiden, wie ein Hirte die Schafe von den Böcken scheidet und wird

die Schafe zu seiner Rechten stellen und die Böcke zu seiner Linken. Dann wird der König sagen zu denen zu seiner Rechten: „Kommet her, ihr Gesegneten des Vaters, ererbet das Reich, das euch bereitet ist von Anbeginn der Welt.“ Matth. 25, 34. Dann wird er sagen zu denen zu seiner Linken: „Gehet hin von mir, ihr Verfluchten, in das ewige Feuer, das bereitet ist dem Teufel und seinen Engeln.“ v. 41. Und sie werden in die ewige Pein gehen, aber die Gerechten in das ewige Leben, v. 46.

XX.

Von dem ewigen Tode

glauben und bekennen wir, daß er als „der andere Tod“ alle im jüngsten Gericht Verurteilten treffen wird. Derselbe wird über alle Mäßen schrecklich sein, indem er in einer gänzlichen Veraubung Gottes, 2. Thess. 1, 9, und in einer Entbehrung alles Guten und alles Trostes, aller Hoffnung und aller Glückseligkeit besteht, Offb. Joh. 6, 16 und 17, und der von dem Herrn Jesu als äußerster Finsternis bezeichnet wird, Matth. 25, 30.

Doch glauben wir, daß Stufen in dieser Strafe des ewigen Todes sein werden, Matth. 11, 20 — 24 und Luk. 12, 47 und 48, wie dies ja die allervollkommenste Gerechtigkeit von selber mit sich bringt, und die auch in dieser wie in allen andern Handlungen Gottes unsträflich dargestellt werden wird, Röm. 8, 13 und Gal. 6, 7—9.

XXI.

Von dem ewigen Leben

glauben und bekennen wir, daß es ein Zustand der Freude und des Trostes, der vollkommenen Herrlichkeit und Glückseligkeit sein wird, der alle unsere jetzigen Begriffe weit übersteigt, Matth. 25, 21 und 1. Kor. 2, 9. Und trotzdem Stufen in dieser Herrlichkeit sein werden, Luk. 19, 16—19 und 1. Kor. 3, 8, so wird dennoch ein jeglicher nach seiner Fähigkeit ganz von Bonne erfüllt sein und mit Glückseligkeit gesättigt werden. Und im Bewußtsein, daß ihnen dieses alles durch die Liebe und Barmherzigkeit Gottes und durch die Erlösung durch Jesum Christum zugeflossen ist, werden alle Seligen in alle Ewigkeit ihren größten Genuß darin finden, daß sie Gott danken und das Lob Jesu Christi verkündigen, indem sie immer wieder von neuem anstimmen und singen werden: „Das Lamm, das erwürget ward, ist würdig zu nehmen Kraft und Reichthum und Weisheit und Stärke und Ehre und Preis und Lob,“ Offb. Joh. 5, 12, und: „Amen, Lob und Ehre und Weisheit und Dank und Preis und Kraft und Stärke sei unserm Gott von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit! Amen.“ Offb. Joh. 7, 12.

What We Believe

By

REV. P. H. UNRUH

Goessel, Kansas.

Short statement of our Mennonite faith.

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WHAT WE BELIEVE

(Short statement of our Mennonite faith)

GC Unruh/Alexanderwohl n.d.

A number of requests came from members of our local church and also other churches for a short, concentrated statement of our faith. Our young people who are working in the large cities have been repeatedly asked to produce something in writing or print which could be considered as an expression of our faith. Our young men during the World War now and then were approached with the charge that the principle of peace or nonresistance is the main and only principle of the Mennonite Faith. By presenting such concentrated expression of our faith we prove that this is only one of the essential points in what we believe and at the same time we are giving out the Gospel. I have found nothing within our conference which will fill this need. This short statement of our faith has been drafted and is published in the hope that it will be improved or a better one will be made.

Peter H. Unruh, Goessel, Kansas.

WE BELIEVE in a triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is the creator of all things in heaven and on earth. God the Father is the Father of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. The Son is our Saviour and Redeemer. He was made sin for us. He is therefore the fullest expression of God's love for "God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." The Holy Spirit is proceeding from both the Father and the Son. He is the spirit of regeneration and seals the believer unto the consummation of redemption at Christ's return. (Math. 28:19, Math. 3:16-17, John 1:1-4, John 15:26, Isaiah 48:16.)

WE BELIEVE that the Old and New Testament, called the Bible, is God's word and although written by men, was in-breathed by the Holy Spirit, and is therefore the infallible record of God's dealing with His creation, and particularly with man. It is God's revelation of his will and plan of redemption. (II Peter 1,20-21.)

WE BELIEVE that God created all that there is visible and invisible and that He created man in his Own image. (Gen. 1:1-29.)

WE BELIEVE that our first parents, Adam and Eve, did not remain in their original state of innocence and happiness but through the subtlety of Satan they were induced to doubt and disobey God and did eat from the forbidden tree of knowl-

edge and thus lost this original state. (Gen. 3:1-24, II Cor. 11:3.)

WE BELIEVE that God made full and ample provision for our salvation from that fall in Christ Jesus; and believing on Him we are saved, and being saved we have both the desire and the duty to bring the Gospel to others. (John 3:16, Acts 4:20, Math. 25:19.)

WE BELIEVE that the church is the body of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, having been called out of the world by a living faith in a crucified, risen, ascended and returning Christ; who so have become partakers of the divine nature that have the power to be called the sons of God and are joint heirs with Christ. They are the body of which Christ is the head. (John 17:16, Acts 2:41, Eph. 2:19-22.)

WE BELIEVE that Christ has commanded that all who believe in Him and His shed blood and have become children of God should be baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, not as a means of salvation, but as the outward sign of their covenant with God, and their having been crucified with Christ. The means of salvation is that living faith in Christ which worketh by love. (Math. 28:19, Rom. 6:6, Gal. 5:6.)

WE BELIEVE that Jesus himself in the night in which He was betrayed instituted the Holy Communion with bread and wine. The former, the emblem of His broken body, the latter the emblem of His shed blood, and commanded that this ordinance should be observed. (Math. 26:26-28, I. Cor. 11:24-26.)

WE BELIEVE that the family is the first institution ordained of God in the garden of Eden and confirmed by Christ, and must be regarded and honored as the holiest temporal relation between two persons on earth, because it is typical of the believer's relation to Christ. Such a union is to be for life, and divorces are unscriptural. (Gen. 2:18-24, Eph. 5:22-23, Math. 5:31-32.)

WE BELIEVE that the office of the worldly government is a necessity and ordained of God. But Church and State, the one a heavenly and the other an earthly institution, are to be organically separate from each other. Where demands of the state are in direct conflict to the order of God one must obey God rather than man. (Rom. 13:1, Acts 5:29.)

WE BELIEVE that a Christian should abstain from any and all forms of oath as well as profanity and idle words and a false affirmation which is justly regarded as perjury. (Math. 12:36, Math. 5:34-37.)

WE BELIEVE that the believer's friendship to the world is at the expense of the friendship of God, and they shall be a separate people not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; hence, we do not permit our members to be members of oath bound lodges also, for by it they are violating our position on the oath and they are yoked to unbelievers.

WE BELIEVE that according to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, and the example of our Lord and Master and the first Christians, believers cannot take part in any carnal strife or warfare, either domestic, religious or civil, or between individuals, factions or nations. The believer is admonished to have peace with all men, to love his enemies and pray for them. The Christian duty is to be subject to the higher powers, but when demands are made by a government contrary to our convictions from the Word of God, e. g. military service, we are governed by the word of the Apostles: "We ought to obey God more than man." (Gal. 5:17, James 4:1, Acts 4:19.)

WE BELIEVE that through the fall of man, the first Adam, death came upon all of the human race, for "death is the wages of sin." For the believer "death is to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." For the ungodly death is to suffer separation from God in torment. (Gen. 2:7, 2 Cor. 5:8, Rom. 5:12.)

WE BELIEVE that there is a resurrection of the body as Christ was bodily raised from the dead as first fruits of them that sleep. They that are Christ's at His coming shall have part in the "first resurrection" at the beginning of the millennium, at the end of which there will be a general resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:2-4, 1 Cor. 15:23, Rev. 20:4 & 12.)

WE BELIEVE that the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man make it necessary for a judgment to come. This will come as declared in the Scriptures and Jesus Christ will be the judge. (Math. 13:40-42, Hebr. 9:27, 2 Cor. 5:10.)

WE BELIEVE that the state of the blessed will be one of perfect joy and happiness and glory, far surpassing our present comprehension. All this has come to them through the unsearchable riches of Christ's grace and mercy in redemption, hence they will find their greatest joy in praising and adoring Him saying: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. — Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever." AMEN. (Rev. 5:12, Rev. 7:12.)

MENNONITE

Articles of Faith

Condensed and translated (1937) from
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"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," (Rom 10:9-10).

—1955—

**First Mennonite Church
Newton, Kansas**

I. God the Creator of All Things

The Lord Jesus, our Savior said: "And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent," (John 17:3). "Ye believe in God, believe also in me," (John 14:1).

We therefore believe with the heart and confess with the mouth that there is only one God, who is almighty, holy, eternal and incomprehensible; who has created heaven and earth, the sea and all that therein is, the visible and the invisible, by his Word (Christ Jesus), from whom and through whom all things consist; who is omnipotent, omniscient, righteous, and who himself is love, (1 John 4:16). "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see," (1 Tim. 6:16). He upholds and sustains all things through his wonderful, providential care. He especially looks in mercy upon his believing children, as a loving father, who numbers the very hairs of their head.

This God we confess, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as he revealed himself at the baptism of Christ. For the voice of the Father was there heard, speaking from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," (Matt. 3:17).

Jesus, the Son of God was baptized by John in the River Jordan, and the Holy Spirit descended from heaven, as a dove. Therefore the Apostle John wrote: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," (1 John 5:7). They are not three Gods, but one triune God, in whose name we are being baptized. We confess also the true divinity of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, and believe that he is the Word, who was in the beginning with God. (John 1:1). Therefore Paul also describes him thus: "Who is over all, God blessed for ever," (Rom. 9:5). John writes: "This is the true God and eternal life," (1 John 5:20). The Lord Jesus said to Philip: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," (John 14:9). This eternal Son of God, in due time, became true man, out of love to us human beings, when he left the throne of his glory, was conceived of the Holy Ghost by the virgin Mary and born of her, and was made like unto us in all things, yet without sin. (1 John 3:5; Heb. 2:14.) "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," (John 1:14). Nevertheless, he did not cease to be true God, "for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (2 Col. 2:9). Therefore he is God and man in one person. This holy incarnation of the Son of God was accomplished that he might become our mediator, to reconcile us with God, by the blood of the cross, through himself, (Col. 1:20). We also believe on the Holy Spirit. He is not only the power and working bestowed upon the apostles and first Christians, but also the power of action through the gift of the Spirit, as Paul testifies: "But all this worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will," (1 Cor. 12:11). And when Ananias had lied to the Holy Spirit, Paul said: "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:4).

II. The Holy Scriptures

We believe and confess, that God has given us the Holy Scriptures as a witness of unfailing truth. We call all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament the Holy Scriptures. For Christ and the apostles have in their teachings quoted from the Old Testament, and we therefore believe that it is the pure, infallible Word of God and the eternal Truth. Whereas we know the sacred Scriptures to be the work of God and the revelation of his holy will, therefore it must be our guide and rule to direct us in our faith and life. "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were

moved by the Holy Ghost," (2 Pet. 1:20-21). "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," (2 Tim. 3:16-17). "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart," (Ps. 19:8).

III. The Image of God in Man and Adam's Fall

We believe and confess, that in the beginning God created man in his image. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him," (Gen. 1:27). Thus man was created in true righteousness and holiness. His condition was very glorious and blessed for he lived in the love of God and communed with his blessed and holy Creator.

But, alas, man did not remain in this happy state; through the transgression of God's laws he fell "And the Lord commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," (Gen. 2:16-17). This sacred command Adam and Eve transgressed, when tempted by the serpent, which is the Devil, or Satan. For they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, to which they were influenced by their lust, for they desired to be made wise as God. But the result of their disobedience was, that they and all their posterity fell into sin and death. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that all men have sinned," (Rom. 5:12).

IV. Redemption through Christ

We believe that the Lord God has not left us in the fall, but sent his Son as a Savior of the world. He became man for our sake. After finishing his work of preaching the gospel, he suffered and died for our salvation on the tree of the cross, was buried and on the third day he rose again from the dead, and forty days after his resurrection he ascended into heaven. He has thus finished the whole work of redemption. Peter says, he has redeemed us with his precious blood, (1 Pet. 1:18-19), and Paul says: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save sinners," (1 Tim. 1:15). "He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," (Heb. 9:26). "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil;

and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage," (Heb. 2:14-15). "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," (Rom. 5:20). He hath obtained eternal redemption for us, (Heb. 9:12). This great kindness is proclaimed to us through the gospel, in order that all who believe in Christ, should not perish but have eternal life. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," (John 1:12). But whoever does not receive Jesus and is not converted, shall be lost because of his unbelief. Jesus says: "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God," (John 3:18). "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," (Rom. 10:10).

V. The Universal Grace of God and Man's Free Will

We confess that the grace of God, revealed in the gift of his Son, is a universal grace. For, when the Lord God foresaw the fall of man, the gracious God had mercy over all mankind and in his love calls all, even the greatest sinners, into his kingdom through conversion. For Jesus Christ, the Son of God "is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," (1 John 2:2). And therefore we call this the universal grace, because the only good God has excluded no one from it. However, if any one does not partake of it, he must blame himself, because through unbelief and disobedience he has robbed himself of God's grace. "And this is condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," (John 3:19). "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," (2 Thess. 2:10). Jesus says: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," (John 3:16). But this work of grace through the Holy Spirit does not operate in man by force. To be converted, he must submit his will to the will of God. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure," (Phil. 2:13). The almighty God does not compel anyone by force, neither for good nor for evil; nor does he predestinate any one through an unconditional choice of grace; but he allows us our free will.

VI. Faith in Christ

We teach and confess, that it is not suf-

ficient to merely know the history of Jesus and accept it as a general truth; nor is the mere confession of the mouth, though very important, not yet the true (saving) faith. The true saving faith is a faith of the heart. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," (Heb. 11:1). Faith brings forth the knowledge of our lost condition and the consequent condemnation. It is a looking up to Jesus, as the Lamb of God which beareth the sin of the world. In faith one accepts Jesus and becomes a child of God, one receives forgiveness of sin and henceforth does not follow the lusts of the flesh, but strives to live after the will of God. Faith is confidence in God. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). This faith is a gift of God and is wrought in us by God's Word and Spirit. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," (1 John 5:4). "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," (Rom. 10:10).

VII. The New Birth and Good Works

Because every man is by nature evil and all that is born of the flesh is carnal, we must be born anew to enter the kingdom of God. This new birth is really the renewing of God's image in man. It is a change of heart and of a carnal to a spiritual mind: a crucifying of the lusts and desires of the flesh, and complete surrender of the heart to God. The new birth is wrought in us by God. Peter teaches: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope. . . ." (1 Pet. 1:3). The means whereby the new birth is accomplished is, first, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, when he convinces us of sin and awakes us to faith. Therefore the Lord Jesus calls it being born of the Spirit. (John 3). This act of regeneration is also called a birth by the Word of God, because James says: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." (Jas. 1:18). We are therefore born again through the living Word of God, which abideth for ever. (1 Pet. 1:23). Through the new birth one is enabled to do good works, which God has ordained that we should walk in them, (Eph. 2:10). One becomes heavenly minded and partakes of the divine nature freely to do good works out of love and to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. (Col. 1:10).

VIII. Justification through Faith

We teach and confess that all who be-

lieve on Jesus Christ and are converted in their heart and born again, are through faith justified. No one is justified before God through his own good works; it is the work of God. He receives the penitent sinner through the atonement of Jesus Christ, forgives all his sins and adopts him as his child and heir to eternal life. The meritorious blood and death of Christ is imputed to the newborn believer as his own righteousness. Paul says: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," (Rom. 3:23-24).

IX. The Church of God

God's children are living stones, built up together into a holy temple, of which Jesus Christ is the cornerstone, (Eph. 2:20-21). These are the church of Christ which he hath purchased with his own blood, (Acts 20:28). They are called the Church of God, the Church of Christ, the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, (1 Pet. 2:9). This church is united with its Lord and Head, as the members of a body are united with its head. They also are members one with another, because they are united in love. God has so united the members of this body that they may have fellowship and not despise one another. They that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please themselves, (Rom. 15:1). No one among them shall think that he has no need of the other, or that he has received his talents for himself alone; for all are united and should use their gifts for a common good. Therefore it is necessary that the believers meet to hear the preaching of God's Word. The Lord has promised: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," (Matt. 18:20). The writer to the Hebrews admonishes that we forsake not the assembling of ourselves together, (Heb. 10:25). Therefore it is the duty of all true disciples of Jesus that they appear in the congregation and not absent themselves because of self-conceit or assumed piety. Although a church cannot by any outward regulation avoid hypocrites and inactive members from creeping in, of which even the apostolic church was not free, the faithful children of God should therefore not be discouraged, because to the end of time the good and the evil must be together. In the great day of judgment the Lord shall know how to divide the good from the evil, (Matt. 25).

X. The Ministry of the Church

We believe and confess, that the Lord

is a God of order. "And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers," (Eph. 4:11). Therefore we believe that the ministry in the church is a divine institution. The Lord Jesus himself commanded: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." (Matt. 9:38). The church then is to look for men of good report and other good qualities, as required in 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1; and 1 Pet. 5. And these shall rightly divide the Word of truth, and not speak what is contrary to the wholesome teaching; but to declare all the counsel of God to the flock entrusted to them. They must pray to God for them and watch over their souls as such who are to give an account thereof. (2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 20:27).

Such men who are called to the ministry of the church, shall be faithful in their service, according to the ability that God has given them. They are not to withdraw under the pretense that no improvement is noticeable, for then they would be looked upon as hirelings, of whom Jesus speaks in John 10:12-13.

XI. Holy Baptism

We confess that next to the preaching of God's Word, water baptism should be administered to such who believe and in repentance confess their sins. For the Lord Jesus himself was baptized and commanded it to his disciples, when he said: "Go ye, therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28:19). This command of the Lord the apostles faithfully followed. They preached repentance to God and faith in the Lord Jesus, and those who received the preached Word were baptized upon the confession of their faith. Therefore we also do not baptize any other persons, but only such who themselves confess their faith. And in the whole New Testament we find no command or example that any one was baptized without the confession of faith, as is seen from many references in Acts. The Christian water baptism is not only a baptism of repentance, as John's baptism, but a baptism into the death of Christ, for it signifies to the believer a cleansing power of the blood of Christ.

XII. The Lord's Supper

We believe and confess, that the Lord Jesus observed this holy sacrament with his disciples in the night when he was betrayed, and thereby instituted a memorial of his suffering. After the eating of the

passover, he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it unto his disciples, saying: Take eat, this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup, after supper; gave thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Drink ye all of it, this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins. This do in remembrance of me. That this sacred ordinance should continue to be observed among Christians, is understood from the repeated command of our Savior himself, when he said: "This do in remembrance of me." To this Paul also witnesses, when he says: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, Take eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Therefore the apostolic church also observed this custom. They brake the bread from house to house on the first day of the week, which is Sunday. (Acts 2:46; 20:7).

But whoever observes the holy supper only as a habit, without the due preparation of his heart, to seek the Lord and communion with him, and in his heart is minded to continue living in sin; such a one is not worthy to eat the Lord's bread and drink his cup. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." (1 Cor. 11:29). Those who desire to appear worthily at this holy meal must be repentant and believing Christians. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." (1 Cor. 11:28).

XIII. Footwashing of Believers

We teach, that the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, laid aside his garments, after supper, and took a towel and girded himself, and poured water into a basin, and began to wash his disciples feet. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments and was sat down again, he said unto them: Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord and say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. (John 13). That this service was also practiced by the first Christians, is seen from 1 Tim. 5:10, where it is men-

tioned among the Christians as works of love. At what occasion it should be practiced we do not find definitely described. Mainly we are to notice that the Lord Jesus herewith wanted to demonstrate, how he in pure love, humbled himself, and took upon him the form of a servant, to redeem us from sin, and teach us how to follow him in humility and love and to serve each other.

XIV. Christian Marriage

We acknowledge that God himself instituted marriage for Adam and Eve, (Gen. 1:22). But he has thus ordained it: that there shall be **one** man and **one** wife in wedlock, (1 Cor. 7:2). The Lord Jesus said: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be one flesh," (Matt. 19:4-5). Married people shall also not be divorced. For the Lord Jesus says: "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. And whosoever shall put away **his wife**, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery," (Matt. 19:6-9). The apostle Paul writes: "And to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife," (1 Cor. 7:10-11).

Married people shall live a chaste and respectable life in their matrimonial state. "Marriage shall be honorable in all and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge," (Heb. 13:4). Persons who may enter the state of matrimony are such who are not too close in blood relation according to the precepts of God's Word in Leviticus chapters 18 and 20. For although this command is given only in the Old Testament, it nevertheless retains its force; for in the whole New Testament we find no reference that it has been abolished, or is otherwise ordained. Moreover, persons who want to be joined in wedlock should be believing church members, for marriage should be in the Lord. But a marriage to an unbeliever, or for a carnal purpose only, is not according to divine order, and cannot be called a marriage in the Lord. But if a member of our church nevertheless enters into such a union, such a step is considered as a deliberate separation from the church. Therefore we in brotherly admonition urge everyone to beware of such, and to enter matrimony in a scriptural manner.

We also admonish in all love not to marry outside of our denomination to avoid shameful discord and other evil results, for instance, at the attendance of church services and the Lord's Supper, or the rearing of the children. Persons who want to enter into wedlock should therefore examine themselves in prayer before God and also seek the advice of their parents and other relatives to follow it and not to grieve them, but to give them joy, (Prov. 10:1). But if a member of our church nevertheless marries a member of another evangelical church, we expect that, for the sake of the spiritual development of their family life, they both become members of one church. But if one prefers to remain single, he also does well, according to the teaching of Paul, if only it is in Christian liberty, as no one is under obligation to God to either remain single or be married.

XV. The Office of Government

We acknowledge that the government is a divine institution to which we shall be subject and obedient in all things and not oppose the law of God, (Acts 4:19). In Romans 13 it says: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." We shall also render tribute, custom, taxes, etc., faithfully and willingly; not out of fear, but also for conscience sake. Herein we follow the example of our Savior, who also paid tribute money, (Matt. 17:27). We must also pray to God for kings (rulers) and the government and strive to walk in obedience to God's Word. Thus we will not receive punishment, but praise, of the same.

XVI. Vengeance, Nonresistance and Suffering

We believe and confess, that the Lord Jesus said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven," (Matt. 5:43-45). And again: "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil," (Matt. 5:39). These words plainly teach, that one shall not revenge himself against his enemies, but love them and be patient with them. All the teachings of Jesus are full of love toward friend and foe. Paul also taught: "Recompense not to man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Avenge not yourselves, dearly beloved;

but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good," (Rom. 12:17-21). We shall follow our Savior, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously," (1 Pet. 2:23).

From these words we see, that all vengeance is forbidden us. Therefore we dare not use any sword or other weapon of defense against our enemies. Paul says: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," (2 Cor. 10:3-4). Whereas the Lord Jesus commanded Peter to put his sword into the sheath, we may not draw it out to defend ourselves against our enemies, or to use force, but should rather suffer and be patient. However, we must not only avoid the sword of war, but our heart and mouth shall also not practice vengeance. We shall follow the Lamb, where he goes; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but in quietness bless, if we want to merit a blessing.

XVII. The Oath

We believe, that in the Old Testament time it was permitted the believers to swear in the name of the Lord and that they were commanded not to take a false oath. But the Lord Jesus, who is the end of the law, expressly said: "Again ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil," (Matt. 5:33-37). But instead of an oath, what is promised or witnessed by us with a conscientious yea (yes), that shall also abide in truth. With God it will be as highly honored, as when others take an oath. "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death," (Rev. 21:8). Therefore we should from the heart speak the truth, at whatever occasion it may be. No one shall imagine that only the judicial oaths are forbidden; but we shall also refrain from

all frivolous swearing and profanity; for the salvation of the soul is precious to us. Jesus says: "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," (Matt. 12:36).

XVIII. Church Discipline

We believe and teach that, according to the command of Christ and his apostles, church discipline or separation should be practiced in the church to those who live in sin and vices. The Lord Jesus teaches thus about it. "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican," (Matt. 18:15-17). Notice that this is spoken of a sin between brother and brother. But such who openly live in the works of the flesh and whom the Apostle Paul excludes from the kingdom of God, and whose deeds are deemed shameful and punishable by the law; such persons must be excluded from the church, without further consideration. This separation shall be done openly before the church, as Paul commands it to Timothy: "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear," (1 Tim. 5:20). Such persons and their deeds one should shun, as Paul writes: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolators; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat," (1 Cor. 5:9-11). And again: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us," (2 Cor. 3:6). "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed," (2 Thes. 3:14). However, we need to be careful, that under pretense of shunning, we do not allow enmity to creep in; for it further says: "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother," (2 Thess. 3:15). But if the separated person acknowledges and confesses the committed sins and shows genuine fruits of repentance, and

properly applies for readmission into the church, after much prayer and supplication to God, we must forgive him and receive him back into the brotherhood of the church. "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which is inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather the more to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow," (2 Cor. 2:6-7). Over such a sinner that repents there is joy in heaven, more than over ninety and nine righteous, who need no repentance, (Luke 15:1-10).

XIX. The Resurrection of the Dead

We believe that all people who have died and shall die in the future, shall once live again and rise from the dead, as is made clear from the writings in the Old and the New Testament. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt," (Dan. 12:2). And the Lord Jesus said: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," (John 5:28-29). Paul the faithful apostle of the Lord writes thus: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures," (1 Cor. 15:3-4). "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that sleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead," (1 Cor. 15:12-21).

XX. The Final Judgment

We believe and confess, that a final or last day shall come without fail, on which the Lord God will judge the whole world. But this judgment will be executed through Christ, the Son of God, as Jesus himself testifies: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man," (John 5:22, 27). Those who are to be judged are all people. "And

before him shall be gathered all nations," (Matt. 25:32). The evil and the good shall be judged. "So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God," (Rom. 14:12). The appearing of this great Judge will be very majestic and glorious. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," (1 Thess. 4:16). He will be accompanied by many thousands of angels and will therefore appear in great power and glory, so that all nature will be moved and astonished. Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and all eyes shall see him, even his enemies who have pierced him. How the judicial sentence will be executed, the Lord Jesus himself has shown: "And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand. Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal," (Matt. 25:31-46).

This is the foundation of our Christian faith, as we find it established in the Holy Scriptures and as taught by our fathers. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," (1 Cor. 3:11).



THE RUSSIAN MB
CONFESSIONAL TRADITION

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

We believe with the heart and confess with the mouth before all men according to the contents of the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God (Heb. 11: 6; Rom. 10: 9—10; 2 Tim. 3: 16—17; 2 Pet. 1: 20—21; Gal. 1: 8; cf. "Conclusion").

I. CONCERNING GOD.

¶ 1. That there is one God, Creator of the heavens and the earth and all visible and invisible things; that He is eternal, almighty, omniscient, alone wise, holy, just and veracious, infinite and omnipresent, alone good and perfect, invisible and incomprehensible, a Spirit; that He is love; merciful, patient, long-suffering; that He is faithful and unchangeable, allsufficient and blessed; that He is the well-spring of life; that He only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; that He sustains and governs and worketh all things; that He is mighty in council and mighty in deed, a Lord of lords and King of kings. The heaven is His throne, and the earth His footstool. Thousand thousands minister unto Him and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before Him. His name is Lord of hosts; the heavens and all the earth are full of His glory. Deut. 4: 35; Gen. 1: 1; Rom. 1: 19—20; Psalms 33: 6; Psalm 90: 2; Rev. 4: 9; Gen. 17: 1; Rev. 1: 8; Psalm 139: 1—4; Rom. 16: 27; Jude 25; Lev. 11: 44; Isa. 6: 3; Rev. 4: 8; Exo. 9: 27; Psalm 11: 7; Psalm 51: 6; Psalm 145: 17; Rev. 15: 3; Rev. 16: 5; Psalm 139: 7—12; Matt. 5: 48; Psalm 25: 8; Matt. 19: 17; Exo. 33: 20; John 1: 18; Psalm 147: 5; Rom. 11: 33; John 4: 24; 1 John 4: 9; Gen. 34: 6; Luk. 6: 36; Rom. 2: 4; Thess. 3: 3; Exo. 3: 14; Mal. 3: 6; Jas. 1: 17; Isa. 43: 22—24; 1 Tim. 6: 15; Psalm 36: 10; Jer. 2: 13; 1 Tim. 6: 16; Deut. 10: 17; 1 Tim. 6: 15; Isa. 51: 15; Psalm 19: 2; Hab. 3: 3.

¶ 2. This one God has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Isa. 6: 3; Matt. 3: 16—17; Matt. 28: 19; John 16: 13—15; 2 Cor. 13: 13; Num. 6: 24—26.

¶ 3. Concerning God, the Father, we believe and confess, that of Him the whole family in heaven and earth is named; that He is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; in particular, that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and all His believers, and that He has made all things through the Son, the Eternal Word, and through the breath of His mouth. 1 Cor. 8: 6; Eph. 3: 15; 2 Cor. 1: 3; Matt. 6: 9; Rom. 8: 14—15; John 1: 3; Col. 1: 16; Heb. 1: 2; Gen. 1: 2; Psalm 33: 6; Job. 33: 4.

¶ 4. Concerning Christ the Son of God, we believe and confess, that He is our Lord, Redeemer and Savior; the eternal living Son of God, begotten of the Father from eternity in an inconceivable manner; that He is His only begotten Son, the true God, magnified in eternity. Luk. 2: 11; Luke 2: 30; John 4: 42; Rom. 3: 24; Matt. 1: 21; Mic. 5: 1; John 1: 1; John 17: 5 and 24; Heb. 13: 8; Psalm 2: 7; Heb. 1: 5—10; Isa. 9: 6; Matt. 17: 5; John 1: 14; John 3: 16 and 18; Rom. 9: 5; 1 John 5: 20.

¶ 5. A—This eternal Son of God, when the time was fulfilled, was sent by the Father from heaven into the world, that His purpose, which He had before the foundation of the world, might be accomplished; namely, to redeem us from the eternal curse. John 3: 13 and 31; 1 Peter 1: 20; John 3: 16 Gal. 3: 13; Rom. 8: 3; 2 Cor. 5: 21.

B—That He through the wonderful power of the Father and working of the Holy Spirit (in conception) was made flesh, a man, of the highly-favored and among the women blessed virgin Mary, was born of her and so in all things became like unto us, but without sin, and thus is true God and true man, our only Savior, Jesus Christ. Gal. 4: 4; Matt. 1: 18; Luk. 1: 28—35; Luk. 2: 7, 11, 21; Phil. 2: 6—8; Heb. 2: 17—18; Heb. 4: 15; 1 John 3: 5; 1 Pet. 2: 22; Col. 1: 3—14; 1 Tim. 2: 5—6.

¶ 6. He has, after a perfect, holy, and sinless life, suffered for us under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried for our sins, descended into hell (into the lower regions of the earth, into prison or Hades) and upon the third day, for our justification, was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the almighty Father and intercedes for us; from whence He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and to establish the kingdom of righteousness and peace, of joy and glory, which kingdom shall have no end.* Matt. 26 and 27; Mark 14 and 15; Luk. 22 and 23; John 18 and 19; Matt. 12: 40; Acts 2: 27; Eph. 4: 9; 1 Pet. 3: 18—19; Rev. 1: 18; 1 Cor. 15: 15; Hos. 13: 14; Rom. 4: 25; Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luk. 24; John 20 and 21; Acts 1; Rom. 8: 34; 1 John 2: 1; Heb. 1: 3; Psalm 22: 29; Psalm 96: 10—13; Psalm 99: 4; Luk. 21: 31; 2 Tim. 4: 1; Rev. 12: 10; Rev. ch. 20—22.

* Menno Simonis has written concerning the person of Christ thus: "I teach all plain and simple, that Jesus Christ, magnified, true God and true man, is a son of God and a son of man, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the pure virgin Mary; a man poor and able to suffer like unto us in all things excepting sin." — Transl. from "Glb. Bekenntnis der M. in Preussen und Ruszland.)

¶ 7. Concerning the **Holy Spirit**. We believe in the Holy Spirit, that giveth life, the Comforter proceeding from the Father, being sent by the Father and the Son, through whom the Father and the Son work, and that He is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, one with them in His divine being; Him we see in the work of creation; He was in the prophets that through Him spoke; He in a bodily form as a dove descended upon our Lord at His baptism; He was poured out upon the apostles of the Lord on holy Pentecost day; He is in all believers; He is in the Church of Christ, teaching, leading, rebuking, comforting, renewing and satisfying; and He glorifies Christ.* 2 Cor. 3: 17—18; John 6: 63; John 14: 26; John 15: 26; 1 Cor. 2: 10; Matt. 10: 20; Gal. 4: 6; Matt. 28: 19; 2 Cor. 13: 13; Heb. 9: 14; Acts 5: 3, 4, 9; Psalms 33: 6; Gen. 1: 2; Job. 33: 4; 1 Pet. 1: 11; 2 Pet. 1: 21; Matt. 3: 16; Acts 2: 1—13; Ezek. 36: 26—27; 1 Cor. 3q 16; John 14: 16, 17, 26, 27; Acts 5: 9—11; Titus 2: 11—12; Titus 3: 5; 1 Pet. 1: 2; 1 John 2: 27; John 16: 14; Rev. 1: 4; Rev. 3: 6; Rev. 22: 17.

* Menno Simonis (vollstaendige Werke, Seite 268, Teil II.): "We confess that the Holy Ghost is a true, real and personal Spirit, as the Church Fathers called Him, and this in a divine sense, like as the Father is a real father and the Son is a real son."

¶ 8. We confess the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to be **one**, unseparated and unintermingled in their being, willing and action; worthy and partaking of the same glory and worship, in the sense that the Father is true eternal God, the Son is true eternal God, and the Spirit is true eternal God. And yet we believe not in three Gods, but in one eternal, incomprehensible triune God.* Luk. 3: 22; Rev. 1: 4—5; (Rev. 1: 4; Rev. 3: 6; Acts 20: 28); John 10: 30; John 14: 16 and 26; John 15: 26; John 16: 13—15; Rev. 4: 2—3; Rev. 5: 5—6; Rev. 7: 17; Rom. 8: 9; 1 Cor. 12: 4—6; John 5: 23; Phil. 2: 9—11; Rev. 5:

* Menno Simonis (page 263 in Vollstaendige Werke): "We believe and confess with the Holy Scriptures that this one eternal, almighty, unsearchable, unspeakable and incomprehensible God is the eternal Son and with His eternal, incomprehensible Holy Spirit. We confess that the Father is truly God, the Son is truly God and the Holy Spirit is truly God — not in a physical and comprehensible, but in a spiritual and inconceivable way. — "Menno S. quotes in his confession, that the ancients called Father, Son and Holy Spirit three persons and thereby understood the three beings." (Meus. K. Handb. 4,549). — C. H. Spurgeon: "To the one God of heaven and of earth be alone honor and praise in the trinity of His holy persons etc. To the glorious Father, as the God of the Covenant of Israel, to the gracious Son, the Savior of His people, and to the Holy Ghost, the author of holiness, be eternal praise," etc. (Eng. Predigtsammlung, Bd. 36, Widmung.)

12—13; 1 Pet. 4: 14; 1 Cor. 6: 12 and 20; Eph. 4: 30; Isa. 48: 16; Isa. 61: 1; Ezek. 11: 5; Matt. 10: 20; Matt. 12: 18; Acts 8: 27 and 39; Acts 16: 6; Rom. 8: 2; Tit. 3: 5; Eph. 4: 6; Matt. 6: 9; Isa. 9: 5; Mic. 5: 1; John 1: 1—14; John 8: 58; John 20: 28; Rom. 9: 5; 1 John 5: 20; Heb. 1: 3—10; Rev. 1: 5—7 and 17; Heb. 9: 14; Matt. 12: 31—32; Acts 5: 3—4; Acts 20: 28; 1 Cor. 3: 16—17; 1 Cor. 12: 11; Rev. 1: 14—2: 7; 2 Cor. 3: 17—18; Gen. 1: 26; Isa. 6: 3; Isa. 61: 1; Rev. 4: 8; Matt. 28: 19; 2 Cor. 13: 13; Num. 6: 24—26.

¶ 9. Unto Him alone we worship and praise and honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen.

II. CONCERNING SIN AND REDEMPTION.

¶ 10. Concerning **sin** we believe and confess, that God created man in His own image, upright and innocent, capable of blessed fellowship with Himself. But man, being tempted of satan, sinned, fell away from God, and fell into physical and spiritual death with all his descendants, so that man is conceived and born in sin as a child of wrath incapable of and not inclined toward the divine good, but capable of and inclined toward evil. Gen. 1: 27 and 31; Gen. 2: 25; Eccl. 7: 30; Gen. 2: 17; Gen. 3: 1—19; Jas. 1: 3—15; John 3: 6; John 8: 44; Rom. 5: 12 and 18; Rom. 6: 23; Rom. 8: 6—7; Psalms 51: 7; Psalms 58: 4; Eph. 2: 1—3; Gen. 8: 21; Jer. 17: 9; Mark 7: 21—23; Mark 16: 14; Luk. 24: 25; Rom. 3: 10—18; Rom. 7: 22—23.

¶ 11. Concerning **redemption** we believe, that man can be redeemed from the curse of eternal death, the wages of sin, and the wrath of God, only through the one eternal and sufficient redeeming and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the lamb of God; and by His grace only are we justified without works, and He only is the ground of our choosing, renewing, and sanctification. John 1 29; John 14 6; Heb. 9: 26; Heb. 10: 14 and 26; Isa. 53; Heb. 9: 11—15; Gal. 3: 10—13; 2 Cor. 5: 21; Eph. 1: 7; 1 Pet. 1: 18—19; 1 John 1: 7; Rom. 3: 24; Rom. 5: 19; Eph. 1: 3—6; 1 Pet. 1: 3; John 17: 19; 1 Cor. 1: 30.

¶ 12. Concerning **divine predestination** and **man's will** we believe, that from eternity it has been the free pleasure and the gracious purpose of God to redeem sinners to the praise of His glory, wherefore also Christ after the premeditated council was selected of God before the foundation of the world, that through His incarnation, life, teaching, death, resurrection and ascension He should be the Redeemer, as our great **Prophet, only High-Priest** and eternal **King**, that all that obey His Gospel believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

¶ 13. Blessed be the God and Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. Eph. 1: 3—14; Eph. 3: 10—12; Col. 1: 13. Compare "Kingdom"; Rom. 8: 28—39; John 10: 28—29; 1 Pet. 1: 20; Phil. 2: 7; Phil. 2: 7; John 14: 6; John 6: 63; Acts 3: 22; Heb. 4: 14—16; Psalms 2: 6—12; Rev. 17: 14; Rom. 1: 5, 10, 13, 16; John 3: 16—21; Acts 2: 23.

¶ 14. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. — Strive to enter in at the strait gate. — Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. Rev. 22: 17; Matt. 11: 28; Matt. 23: 37—38; Luk. 13: 24; Phil. 2: 12—13; 2 Pet. 1: 10; Ezek. 33: 11; Isa. 55: 7; Psalms 103: 1—8; Psalms 22; Psalms 145: 9; Matt. 26: 41.

¶ 15. Concerning **conversion, renewal or the new birth** we believe, that through the living and powerful Word of God man is awakened from sin. John 1: 9.

¶ 16. If he now is obedient and does not close his heart against the working of divine grace; he receives repentance unto life, to see his sin, repent of it, confess and forsake it; and in recognition of the holy and just judgment of God through prayer seeks refuge in Christ as the only Savior from the guilt of sin and the lust thereof and receives through faith in Him forgiveness of sins, justification, and the witness and sealing of the Holy Spirit that he is a child of God and heir of life eternal. Heb. 4: 12; Acts 2: 37; Isa. 55: 10—11; Rev. 3: 20; Lk. 24: 47; Acts 11: 18; Acts 26: 18; Lk. 15: 18—21; Lk. 18: 13; 1 John 1: 9; Psalms 32: 1—5; Psalms 51; 2 Cor. 7: 10; Jas. 5: 16; Psalms 34: 15; Prov. 28: 13; Isa. 55: 7; Rev. 16: 7; Matt. 11: 28; John 14: 6 and 13; Acts 4: 12; Rom. 3: 24—28; Rom. 8: 16—17; Gal. 4: 6; 1 John 5: 10—11; Eph. 1: 13; Eph. 4: 30; 1 John 2: 20 and 27; Tit. 3: 5—7.

¶ 17. This great change in the heart of man is the work of the Holy Spirit who, according to the gracious will of God, accompanies the Word with His powerful working and thus by means of the redemption through Christ worketh the new birth and renewal of the sinner unto a new life of sanctification and a joyous hope of eternal life. Acts 16: 14; 1 Cor. 2: 4—5; 1 Cor. 6: 11; 1 Cor. 12: 3; John 1: 12—13; John 3: 3, 5, 7; 1 Pet. 1: 23; Jas. 1: 18; Gal. 6: 15; 1 Thess.

5: 23; Rom. 12: 12; Phil. 4: 4; 1 Pet. 1: 3—5; Acts 2: 41; Acts 8: 12; Acts 10: 44—48. Compare also IV.

¶ 18. Regarding **sanctification** we believe and confess, that without it no one shall see the Lord. Sanctification is a fruit and result of the saving faith in Jesus Christ, which faith worketh through love; for faith without works is dead. Heb. 12: 14; Gal. 5: 6; 1 Pet. 1: 15—16; Acts 15: 9; Rom. 6: 22; 1 Cor. 1: 13; Jas. 2: 14—26; Matt. 7: 16—27.

¶ 19. After the reign of sin has been overcome in the heart of the regenerated person, he will show through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit and partaking of the divine nature, all diligence to add to his faith virtue and love, to make his calling and election sure and to offer soul and body as a living sacrifice to God in thankfulness and love, reminding of the words: We love Him because He first loved us. Rom. 6: 6—12; 1 John 3: 3; 2 Pet. 1: 3—11; Rom. 12: 1 ff; 1 Thess. 5: 23; 1 John 4: 19.

¶ 20. In such a life of sanctification the regenerate person is still capable of sinning, Heb. 12: 1 and Rom. 7: 7—21, if he be not watchful and remain not in Christ. 1 John 1: 8—10; 1 John 2: 1—2; Matt. 26: 41; John 15: 4—6; cf. ¶ 42.

¶ 21. Essence and aim of sanctification is implicit love toward God and a hearty brotherly love and love for the neighbor, which is created and nurtured through the Holy Spirit. Matt. 7: 12; Matt. 22: 37—40; Gal. 5: 22; 2 Tim. 1: 7. Through this love the Christian becomes the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Matt. 5: 13—14; Eph. 5: 8; cf. Kingdom.

¶ 22. The purpose of sanctification is the glorification of God. Matt. 5: 16; Eph. 2: 9—10; 1 Pet. 2: 12.

¶ 23. The one perfect example of sanctification is the Son of Man, Jesus Christ. John 12: 26; Eph. 4: 12—13; Phil. 2: 5; 1 Pet. 2: 21; 1 Cor. 1: 1; Phil. 3: 17; Heb. 13: 7.

¶ 24. The power of sanctification is Christ through faith dwelling in the heart of the regenerate man. Eph. 3: 16—19; John 14: 23. Without this gracious indwelling of Christ and God the believer has neither power to stand against sin nor power to grow in the inner man. John 15: 4—5; Eph. 4: 15; Col. 1: 11; Col. 2: 19; 2 Pet. 3: 18.

¶ 25. Sanctification is progressive throughout life and the believers have their perfection only in Christ. Phil. 3: 9—15; 1 Thess. 4: 1; Matt. 5: 48; Col. 2: 10; Col. 3: 14. Even in a holy walk the believers need at all times the forgiving, chastening and cleansing grace of God through the blood of Christ.* Titus 2: 11—12; Heb. 12: 5—11; Jas. 2: 10; 1 John 1: 6—10; 1 John 2: 1—2; Dan. 9: 18.

¶ 26. The perceptible means of grace, which God has ordained in his Word and through which the Holy Spirit worketh in virtue of the redeeming blood of Christ in the work of conversion and sanctification are: the Word (the preaching) in conversion; the Word, holy baptism, and the Lord's Supper for the converted in the congregation of the believers, the Church of Christ. Mk. 16: 15; Lk. 24: 47; Acts 2: 14 etc.; Acts 8: 4 etc. and 35. Acts 10: 34—44. Acts 16: 13—32; Col. 3: 16; (cf "Close", quotation); Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 41; Acts 8: 12 and 38; Acts 10: 47—48; Acts 16: 33; Acts 2: 42 and 46; Heb. 10: 25; 1 Cor. ch. 14.

¶ 27. Prayer accompanies all these divinely ordained means and all acts of the spiritual life of every Christian and ceaseth not in the

* Menno Simonis writes concerning regeneration and sanctification: "What is regeneration other than the change and renewal of man, which God worketh through faith in Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit; also that man is created out of God, born out of His seed, made after His image, renewed to know Him, partaking of His divine nature and born of His spirit to serve God in holiness and righteousness in a new nature of the Spirit all his life! Where this happens and is accomplished there is the true new birth, there is the new creature in Christ Jesus!" (Glaubensbekenntnis der Mennoniten in Preuszen und Ruszland, Berdjansk, 1874. — transl.)

entire congregation of God, the New Testament priesthood, according to the teaching and example of the Lord Jesus and His apostles as we read: Lk. 3: 21; Heb. 5: 7; Matt. 6: 5—18; Matt. 7: 7—11; Lk. 11: 1—13; Acts 2: 21; 9: 11; 22: 16; 1 Thess. 5: 17; Acts 2: 42; 3: 1; Mk. 9: 29; Jas. 5: 13—16; Lev. 6: 6 (13); Isa. 62: 6; Rev. 5: 8; 8: 3 and 4; 1 Tim. 2: 1—4; Lk. 18: 1—8; Acts 1: 23—26; 6: 6; 13: 1—3; 14: 23; 12: 5; Heb. 13: 3; Eph. 6: 18—19; Dan. 9: 1—22; Gen. 18: 22—32; Psal. 50: 14—15; Phil. 4: 6; Rom. 8: 26—27.

III CONCERNING THE CONGREGATION, THE CHURCH OF GOD* OR ASSEMBLY OF BELIEVERS.

¶ 28. We believe and confess our faith in the existence of one holy, general Christian, apostolic Church, the congregation of saints.

¶ 29. This congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed through His own blood and washed them from their sins, and gave Himself for the church; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot,

or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Acts 20: 28; Rev. 1: 5; Eph. 5: 25—27.

¶ 30. The Church of Christ is composed of all that through true faith in Jesus Christ and through obedience to the Gospel have separated themselves from the world and have their fellowship in the Holy Spirit with God the Father and Jesus Christ their only mediator, and have come unto an innumerable company of angels and unto the spirits of just men made perfect, as fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. Eph. 1: 1; 1 Pet. 1: 1—2; cf. "choosing", "conversion", "sanctification"; Rom. 6: 17; 10: 16—17; 2 Cor. 6: 17; Acts 2: 40—41; John 15: 1—5; 1 John 1: 3; 1 Tim. 2: 5; 2 Cor. 13: 13; Heb. 12: 22—24; Eph. 2: 19—22; 1 Cor. 3: 11—15; Matt. 6: 16—18; 1 Tim. 3: 15.

¶ 31. Although the members of this church belong to all nations and ranks scattered here and there throughout the world and are divided in denominations, yet they all are one and among one another brethren and members and exist as one body in Christ their head, who is the Lord, Chief, Shepherd, Prophet, Priest and King of the church. Rev. 5: 9; Col. 3: 11; Jas. 1: 1; Rev. ch. 2 and 3; John 17: 21; 1 Cor. ch. 12; Eph. 4: 1—16; 1 Cor. 1: 10—13; 3: 4—7; Eph. 1: 22; 4: 15; Col. 1: 18; Matt. 20: 25—28; 23: 8—12; 1 Pet. 2: 17; Rom. 12: 10; 1 Pet. 2: 25; 5: 4; Heb. 13: 20; Acts 3: 22—23; Heb. 4: 15; 7: 21; 9: 11—15; Rom. 8: 34; 1 John 2: 1; John 18: 37; Luk. 1: 33; Heb. 7: 1—3; Rev. 15: 3; 17: 14.

¶ 32. The characteristics of the true Church are: the fruits of conversion and of the right faith in Jesus Christ revealed in a life of sanctification according to the teaching of Christ and His apostles; the diligent searching of the Scriptures and the preaching of the pure Gospel in all the world; practice of the holy ordinances of Christ which are, baptism and the Lord's Supper, the free confession of God and Jesus Christ before all men; fervent brotherly love, fellowship and submission among themselves and love of their neighbors; diligence to uphold the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace; taking up the cross in following Jesus; watching with prayer and supplication and thanksgiving for all men, and the prayerful and joyful waiting for the coming of the Lord and the establishment of His kingdom. 1 John 4: 1; Matt. 3: 8—9; Matt. 6: 10; Acts 1: 6—7; Luk. 21: 31; Heb. 9: 28; 2 Thess. 1: 7 and 10. 2 Pet. 3: 12—14; (cf. II, "Church" and IV. "Prayer" and V.)

* The "Church" is the called-out congregation of believers, assembled, and acting, according to its calling.

¶ 33. Those which show these characteristics of true fellowship with God in their lives, even if accompanied by weakness and imperfection and yet in uprightness are through Christ cleansed and regenerated, true members of His body and heirs of eternal life. They constitute the spiritual house, the holy temple of God, the chosen generation, the kingly and holy priesthood of God to offer spiritual sacrifice well pleasing to God through Jesus Christ. Rom. 14: 1; 15: 1; Phil. 3: 12, 15, 16; Pro. 2: 7; 2 Tim. 2: 19; Rom. 8: 1, 14, 17; Col. 1: 12; Matt. 7: 21; 2 Tim. 2: 19; (cf. Discipline); 1 Cor. 3: 16; 2 Cor. 3: 16; 1 Pet. 2: 5, 9.

¶ 34. But He, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, searcheth the reins of the hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to his works. Rev. 2: 1 and 23.

¶ 35. This Church of God is upheld by the preaching of the holy Gospel and the teaching and leadership of the Holy Spirit. Matt. 28: 18—20; Mark 16: 15; Acts 2; John 14: 26; John 16: 13. All questions relating to doctrine and life in the congregation are decided according to the example of the apostolic church, as we read: Acts 15: 1—28; 1 Cor. 14: 40; 2 Cor. 3: 17; Eph. 5: 21; Col. 2: 5; 1 Cor. 11: 16; 1 Cor. 6: 1—8; 2 Tim. 2: 14; **Rule and guide** of the church for all times are the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament. Psal. 119: 105; Matt. 5: 21—22; 17: 5; Lk. 10: 16; Matt. 23: 8—10; 1 Cor. 3: 9—11; 2 Pet. 1: 13 and 15; Gal. 1: 8—9; 2 Thess. 2: 15; 2 Thess. 3: 6; (cf. "Close").

¶ 36. The stewards of the mysteries of God in the church are primarily the ministers and servants of Jesus Christ, who is the only priest and mediator of the New Testament. 1 Pet. 4: 10; 1 Cor. 4: 1; Heb. 5: 6; 7: 17; 9: 15; 10: 12; 1 Tim. 2: 5; Rom. 8: 34.

¶ 37. Concerning the office of the ministers or servants of the Word and of the deacons (servants; helpers, overseers of the poor) we believe and confess, that according to the practice of the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles, God has given to His church the power through the leadership of the Holy Spirit to ordain ministers and servants for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ. Matt. ch. 10; Luk. ch. 10; Acts 13: 1—4; 20: 28; Phil. 1: 1; Titus 1: 5; Acts 6: 1—7; 1 Cor. ch. 12; Eph. 4: 11—14.

¶ 38. The commission to such office (service) is accomplished according to the method of the apostolic church through the servants of the Church, who in fervent prayer call upon the name of God, fully trusting that Christ, as head of the church, through His Holy Spirit will reveal those who shall

be useful in service, thus fulfilling His divine promise: And I will give you pastors according to my heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. Acts 1: 15—26; 13: 1—4; 14: 23; 1 Tim. 4: 14; 5: 22; 2 Tim. 1: 6; Matt. 18: 19—20; John 14: 13—14; Jer. 3: 15; Acts 9: 15; Rom. 1: 1—5; 1 Cor. 16: 15; Gal. 1: 1.*

¶ 39. The required qualifications of servants of the Word the Spirit has made known in the Word: An elder or bishop (overseer, shepherd, preacher of the Gospel) shall be blameless as a steward of God, apt to teach, holding fast the faithful Word. He must take heed therefore unto himself and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers, to feed the church of God, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, not as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock doing the work of an

* Menno Simonis taught concerning the election of ministers of the Word: Some without the aid of men are called out by the Lord and sent by His Spirit, as was the case with the prophets and apostles and as had the house of Stephanus addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, 1 Cor. 16: 15. Others are secured through the aid of believers, as we read Acts 1." (Mennos Fundamente, Buch 1, Seite 148 in der Stiftungskunde der M. Br. Gem. 6. Januar, 1860. Jedoch gilt der Gemeinde 1. Joh. 4: 1. Siehe auch Seite 27, Irrlehrer.)

evangelist, making full proof of his ministry. So shall he, when the chief Shepherd shall appear receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 1 Tim. 3: 1—7; 2 Tim. 3: 17; 4: 2—5; Titus 1: 5—9; 2: 7; Rom. 12: 7—11; Acts 20: 28 and 31; Matt. 20: 25—28; 1 Pet. 5: 1—4; Rev. 2: 1, 8, 12, 18; Jas. 3: 1.

¶ 40 The church shall count such servants worthy of double honor, shall love them, obey them, impart to them all manner of good, according to the Scriptures. 1 Tim. 5: 17—19; Heb. 13: 17; 1 Thess. 5: 12—13; 1 Pet. 5: 5; Luk. 10: 1 and 7; Gal. 6: 6; 1 Cor. ch. 9. But from false teachers the church shall turn away and shall put them aside according to the teaching of the Lord Jesus and His apostles. Matt. 7: 15 and 16; Acts 20: 29—31; Gal. 1: 6—9; 1 Tim. 4: 1—3; 2 Tim. 3: 1—9; 4: 3—5; Titus 3: 10; 2 Pet. 2: 1; 1 John 4: 1—6; 2 John 7—11. 3 John 9—11; Jude vs. 4, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25; 1 John 2: 27—28; cf. Conclusion.

¶ 41. Concerning the office of **deaconry** we believe, that the church shall choose men according to the example of the apostolic church, as such are designated in Acts 6: 1—6; and 1 Tim. 3: 8—10. These are by virtue of their calling into service placed under duty to supply the poor and the suffering in their want with the provisions given by the church, and according to the measure

of their gifts to assist in the building up of the church and to serve according to the teaching of Paul: Hath any one a ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Rom. 12: 7—11.

¶ 42. Concerning christian exhortation, pastoral care and church discipline our Lord Jesus taught: Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church, but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Matt. 18: 15—20. The apostle Paul writes: Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 1 Thess. 5: 11—14; Acts 20: 28 and 32.

¶ 43. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump. If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one do not eat. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. What part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Now we command you brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly; have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet court him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them, a man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject. 1 Tim. 5: 20; 1 Cor. 5: 6, 7, 11, 13; 2 Cor. 6: 15; 2 Thess. 3: 6, 14, 15; Rom. 16: 17 (cf. above "Marks") The church shall treat such excommunicated persons with love and helpful compassion, as it behooves a Christian to love all men, yea, even his enemies. 2 Thess. 3: 15; Phil. 4: 5.

¶ 44. If an excommunicated person shows repentance and sorrow over his sin, the church shall forgive him again and accept him into membership according to the word of the Savior, when Peter said to Him:

Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? I say not unto thee, until seven times; but, until seventy times seven. Matt. 18: 21—35. And the apostle Paul teaches: Sufficient to such man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrarywise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him; lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. 2 Cor. 2: 2—11.

¶ 45. Note to the subject: "Church of God", ¶ 35, Acts 15 and ¶ 39, "Elder and Bishop".

In the household of the M. B. Church the order obtains, that one elder or a substitute for the elder acts as moderator of local churches and leader. The other ministers are his co-workers. With the various affairs of the entire denomination the suitable elders and other brethren are entrusted. The decisions made at the annual sessions of the entire denomination (triennial general conference or annual district conference) become operative in such local church through acceptance at a regular church council meeting. In making decisions in the local church council or in the general conference meetings the rule obtains that, whenever a non-desirable difference of view arises, the minority willingly submit itself; for thus only can freedom and order be upheld in the house of God. (See "Glbk. und Verfass. 1873.)

IV. CONCERNING CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

¶ 46. We believe and confess, that christian baptism is a holy, visible, evangelical, sacred act and ordinance (institution) of Christ, commanded by the Lord Himself for a sacred sign of regeneration and embodiment in Him and His church. Holy Baptism is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but for the honest believer a blessed representation of the purging from the inner sinful uncleanness of the soul by the blood of Christ, through which forgiveness of sin has been received, and the answer of a good conscience toward God. Cf. II., "Conversion". 1 Cor. 12: 27; 1 Pet. 3: 21; Rev. 1: 5.

¶ 47. The practice of baptism consists in this, that all, that hear the Gospel and in repentance of heart and living faith accept it, on their confession of a new life from God

* Compare Matt. 3: 11 and John 1: 26 according to English Revised and American Revised Versions. "Baptism is administered by immersion in water" (Erklaerung der Menn. Brudergemeinde vom 7. Mai 1862, und Juni 1868): "Baptism in the Greek "baptismos" and in the Latin "mersio" means that some-

(Col. 2: 12—13) are baptized (immersed) in* water according to the command of Christ:

thing be entirely dipped into water, until it meet above. Also without doubt, the German word "Taufe" (baptism) comes from the word "Tiefe" (depth) (Dr. Luther, Sermon on Baptism). — "The word, "baptizo", "baptize" means to immerse and the practice of immersion was observed by the early church". (Words of Calvin in DeBaptismo). — In the "Confession of Faith" etc. of Cornelius Ris approved of the Mennonite churches "zur Sonne" in Amsterdam and many others in the year 1773, we read (by C. H. A. van der Smissen in "Kurzgefaszte Geschichte und Glaubenslehre der Mennoniten") "Article XXV. Concerning water baptism" "Regarding holy baptism we understand thereby an immersion of the entire body in and under water". Rom. 6: 4; Matt. 3: 16; Acts 8: 37—38." But then it says further: "or an abundant sprinkling with the same which latter mode we find generally appropriate in these northern regions, because thereby the same benefits are expressed)". Notice that in this immersion is attested to by three places in Scripture whereas no Scripture is mentioned in this confession for sprinkling. The well-known old Mennonite preacher Jacob Denner (died 1746) was, according to the Mennonite authors, pastor C. H. A. van der Smissen and pastor Berend C. Roosen, preacher of the "Dompelaars" which word signifies "immersion church" in Altona and Friedringsstadt, Germany. Menno Simonis Treatise on baptism has the title: "Die Christliche Taufe in dem Wasser, erklart aus dem Worte Gottes (Christian Baptism in water, explained out of the Word of God)." See his "Vollstaendige Werke."

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. — Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Matt. 28: 18—20; Mark 16: 15—16; John 3: 22.

¶ 48. This command of the Lord the apostles have carried out and thereby many have been brought into the faith and have been baptized, both men and women, as especially on the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem. And they, which gladly received the words of Peter and the other apostles were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. Acts chapters 2, 8, 10, 16.

¶ 49. The children of believers (Acts 2: 39) shall continually be brought before the Lord in prayer by the parents and the church, and shall be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and instructed in the Scriptures according to the measure of their understanding. 1 Tim. 2: 1; Matt. 19: 13—15; Deut. 6: 6—7; Eph. 6:

4; 2 Tim. 3: 15; Luk. 2: 42. When later they have advanced so far that they can comprehend the calling voice of the holy Gospel, and accept the Word with a repentent heart and take faith in the Lord Jesus, it becomes them unto their own desire and free confession to receive holy baptism, as says the apostle Paul: So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Luk. 2: 52; Acts 8: 5, 6, 12; 10: 33—48; 16: 14, 15, 31—34; Rom. 10: 17; John 3: 5—8; Matt. 4: 1; 2 Tim. 2: 13.

¶ 50. Baptism shall rightfully be administered once in the life of the believer. Eph. 4:5.

¶ 51. The believers are bound together through baptism as having died unto sin to walk in the newness of life as taught by the apostle Paul: How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. The believers have in baptism put on Christ (Gal. 3: 27). Therefore every one must contribute according to his calling and gifts toward the support and betterment of the body of Christ in spiritual and temporal things with diligence. Matt. 25: 14; Luk. 13: 13; 1 Cor. 4: 1—10; 1 John 3: 17; Jas. 1: 27; 2: 15—16; 1 John 2: 12—14; Col. 3: 18—25; 4: 1; Rom. 16: 1—4; 6; Tit. 2: 1—10; Matt. 21: 15—16; 1 Cor. ch. 13. As true members of the household of God and children of the kingdom (Matt. 13: 38), they shall carefully guard the holy privileges of divine citizenship and duties received of Christ their head and be subject to all the commandments of their King and obedient to them according to His Word: Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded to you. Matt. 28: 20; Eph. 1: 22; 2: 19—20; Heb. 10: 25; Acts 2: 42.

V. CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

¶ 52. We believe, that this is a holy, visible, evangelical practice and ordinance (institution) of Christ. Bread and wine are used. The bread is broken, and distributed as also is the wine, and is partaken of by such as believe and have been baptized according to the ordinance of Christ, and that have examined and judged themselves. This holy ordinance is to be practiced faithfully and in simplicity in accordance with the example set by our Lord as found in the Gospels and in the teachings of Paul: For I re-

ceived of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. — But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. Matt. 26: 26—30; Mk. 14: 22—26; Luk. 22: 18—20; 1 Cor. 11: 23—32.

¶ 53. In this holy supper we are brought to see that Christ's holy body was sacrificed on the cross and His precious blood shed for the remission of our sin, and that He now being glorified in His heavenly state, is life-giving bread, meat and drink for our souls and unites Himself with all true believing souls for spiritual communion according to His Word: Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me. Gal. 3: 1; Eph. 1: 7; Mark 16: 19; Eph. 2: 6; Phil. 3: 21; John 6: 51, 53—58, 63; Rev. 3: 20.

¶ 54. Only the gracious enlightenment and fellowship of the Holy Spirit can enable the believer to rightfully examine himself, and prepare him to partake of this holy supper in a worthy manner and teach the hidden meaning of the same, so that in partaking of the Lord's supper they may be fed with the body and blood of Christ, thus to partake of all His sufferings and His merits and be greatly comforted in the strong covenant of grace with God, their heavenly Father. John 6: 63; 14: 26; 1 Cor. 2: 10; Rom. 3: 24; Isa. 53: 4, 5, 10; 1 Pet. 2: 24; Isa. 40: 1—2; 54: 10; 1 Thess. 5: 24.

¶ 55. Thus this sacrament becomes for the believing church a supper of praise and thanksgiving, in which it rejoices over the blessed promises of the holy supper with their divine Redeemer and all His saints in the kingdom. It becomes a supper strengthening the believer for ready service and true following of Christ in patiently bearing His cross and for growth in true love in all things into Him, which is the head, even Christ, for the building up and betterment of His temple, the Church. All this is carried out as a joyous thank-offering through Jesus Christ for all gifts of divine grace and well-doing to the glory of God the Father. Luk. 13: 29;

22: 16, 18; Rev. 19: 7, 9; Mark 14: 26; Acts 2: 46—47; Matt. 16: 24; John 12: 26; Rom. 12: 1; Eph. 4: 15—16; 1 Pet. 2: 5; Psalms 116: 12—14; 50: 23; Phil. 1: 11; 1 John 4: 19; cf. II. Sanctification and Means etc.

¶ 56. This supper of holy communion of the believers with Christ, their head, is at the same time the expression of holy communion of the believers among themselves and it binds them together in love, peace, and unity according to the words of the Scriptures: The cup of the blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. 1 Cor. 10: 16—17; 1 Cor. 5: 11; 2 Cor. 6: 15; of ¶ 43, "Church Discipline".

Concerning the washing of the feet by the Lord and among the believers.

¶ 57. We believe, confess, and practice this in the church according to the example and command of our Savior, as we read: Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end He rose from the supper and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded So after He had washed their feet, ... He said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. John ch. 13; 1 Tim. 5: 10.

VI. CONCERNING MATRIMONY.

¶ 58. We believe and confess, that it is a divine institution introduced by God Himself in paradise and confirmed in the case of our first parents, Adam and Eve, one man and one woman — for mutual help and joy and for the prevention of all uncleanness and disorder — and blessed to fill the earth. Gen. 1: 27—28; Gen. 2: 18—24; Pro. 5: 17—18.

¶ 59. This institution of God, the Lord Jesus Christ has confirmed. Thereby it has been sanctified for the believers of the New Covenant; only let it be entered upon in the Lord in accordance with divine and human

ordinance, and let this tie be confirmed and sanctified by the church through the Word of God and prayer and the matrimonial life be kept sacred. Matt. 19: 4—6; 1 Cor. ch. 7; 1 Pet. 2: 13; 1 Tim. 4: 5; John 2: 1—2; Matt. 22: 1—14; Heb. 13: 4.

¶ 60. Concerning the sacredness and firm union of the matrimonial bond our Lord and Savior teaches: He which made them at the beginning made them male and female and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. Moses because the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away committeth adultery, and causeth her to commit adultery. Matt. 5: 31—32; 19: 3—9; 1 Cor. 7: 10—15; and 39; Eph. 5: 22—33.

VII. CONCERNING THE CHRISTIAN DAY OF REST.*

¶ 61. We believe and confess: The New Testament day of rest and solemn assembly for the purpose of united worship of God and the building up of believers among themselves, is, according to the example and practice of the apostles under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the first day of the week, that is the day of resurrection of our Lord and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This sanctified day is to be celebrated in the spirit and according to the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus and His apostles. On this day the preaching of the Gospel, the care and nurture of the Christian life, and the practice of the sacred ordinance shall especially take place. This day is a gift of grace — our good God in Christ for our spiritual and temporal welfare. Exo. 20: 8; Matt. 28: 1; Mk. 16: 2; Luk. 24: 1—36; John 20: 1; 19: 26; Acts 2: 1; Acts 20: 7; Cor. 16: 1—2; Matt. 12: 1—14; Mk. 2: 23—28; 3: 1—11; John 5: 9—16; 9: 13; Col. 2: 16—17; Rom. 14: 5—6; Psal. 118: 24.

¶ 62. Nevertheless, it remains a duty to work six days honestly and diligently and to follow our civil pursuits, but keeping in mind the word of the Lord: Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Exo. 20: 9; Eph. 4: 28; 1 Thess. 4: 11—12; 2 Thess. 3: 6—13; Matt. 6: 33.

* "Sabbath in the Hebrew means "rest", "celebration". (Heyse, Rost, Brockhaus and others.)

VIII. CONCERNING THE DIVINE LAW.

¶ 63. We believe and confess, that the outward part of it dealing with sacrifices, sacred places, times, objects, meats, genealogies, etc., the shadow of things to come, have been fulfilled and set aside by Christ. Rom. 10: 4; Heb. 7: 19; ch. 9; 10: 1; Rom. 14: 2—6; Gal. 4: 3, 9, 10; Col. 2: 16—28; Tit. 3: 9. But in its spiritual and moral sense the law, in substance expressed in the ten commandments, and by Christ elaborated and given deeper meaning (Matt. ch. 5 etc.) is binding for all times and useful, if any man use it lawfully. Rom. 7: 14; Luk. 10: 27; Rom. 13: 8—10; Exo. 20: 1—7; Matt. 5: 17—20; Rom. 3: 31; 7: 12; 1 Tim. 1: 8—10; Gal. ch. 3; Rom. 3: 20; 7: 7.

IX. CONCERNING THE OFFICE OF POWER; CONCERNING THE TAKING OF AN OATH; CONCERNING REVENGE, NON-RESISTANCE AND LOVE OF ENEMIES; AND CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Concerning the Office of Powers.

¶ 46. We believe and confess: That God, who is a King of all kings and Lord of all lords has put into all lands rulers and powers for the common good and welfare and the leading of a good honorable civil life. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God. . . . For he is the minister of God and beareth not the sword in vain. He (the ruler) is for the protection of the just but a revenge to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For this reason are all believers, yea, all men subject to fear the powers and bound by the word of God to honor them and obey them in all things not conflicting with the Word of God. They are bound to pay tribute and duties and taxes according to the teaching and example of the Savior: Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's (Matt. 17: 24—27; 22: 15—21); and according to the words of the apostle Peter: Submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. Likewise is it our duty to pray for these according to command of Paul: I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in au-

thority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of our God and Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Dan. 2: 21, 37, 38; Pro. 8: 16; Rom. 13: 1—7; Acts 4: 19; 1 Tim. 2: 1—4; Tit. 3: 1; 1 Pet. 2: 13—14.

May the Almighty give them wisdom and grace to rule their lands, cities and subjects in righteousness and peace and to inherit eternal salvation hereafter.

Now, unto the King eternal, imperishable, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen

Thy Kingdom come!"

Concerning the Taking of an Oath.

¶ 65. We believe and confess, that to the fathers under the old covenant it was permitted to take a true oath by the name of God. But the Lord Jesus, the Son of the living God, the King and Founder of the new covenant, has in the following words forbidden believers to swear with an oath: Again, ye have heard that it hath been said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne, etc. . . . But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. Also the apostle James exhorts: But above all things, my brethern, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation. But our words must be true and your "yea" and "nay" must stand for as complete truth as the highest oath. Matt. 5: 33—37; Jas. 5: 12; Matt. 12: 36; Col. 3: 9.

Concerning Revenge, Non-resistance and Love of Enemies.

¶ 66. We believe and confess, according to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ: Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. No one may practice revenge against his enemies. We also do not feel justified to carry the sword. The apostle Paul teaches thus. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is

written: Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. The apostle Peter also says: For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. Matt. 5: 21, 25, 38, 40, 48; 26: 52—53; John 18: 11; Rom. 12: 19—21; 1 Pet. 2: 19—23; 1 Cor. 6: 1—8.

¶ 67. But our longing, prayer and effort shall be more and more directed toward the Kingdom foretold by the prophets and by Christ and His apostles, which God from heaven shall establish through His Son Jesus Christ, in whom He has resolved it, where none shall do harm nor learn to war, where righteousness, love and peace shall reign. Dan. 2: 44; 7: 27; Isa. 2: 4; 9: 4—7; 11: 1—9; 57: 15—19; 61: 1—11; 65: 17—25; 66: 10—14; Lk. 4: 18—19; Matt. 6: 10: 13; 13: 43; 24: 17 etc.; 26: 29; Lk. 22: 29—30; Acts 1: 6—7; 17: 31; 2 Tim. 4: 1; Rev. 11: 15; 12: 10; Rev. ch. 20; 2 Pet. 3: 13; Rev. ch. 21—22.

X. CONCERNING THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND THE LAST JUDGMENT AND ITS EXECUTION.

¶ 68. We believe and confess, that the Lord Jesus Christ, our King, in like manner as He visibly ascended into heaven shall come down again from heaven. Psal. 2: 6; Heb. 7: 2—3; Rev. 17: 14; Acts 1: 11.

¶ 69. The hour is coming, saith the Lord, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. John 5: 25—29.

¶ 70. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; so then every one of us shall give account of himself to God, that every one receive the thing done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Rom. 14: 10—12; 2 Cor. 5: 10.

¶ 71. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first, incorruptable and in glory. Then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 1 Thess. 4: 16—17; Rev. ch. 19—20: 6; cf ¶ 67 "Kingdom".

¶ 72. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end. 1 Cor. 15: 21—24, 42, 43, 51—57; Jer. 31: 1—14; Zec. 12: 10—11; Luk. 13: 28—30. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection etc. Rev. 20: 6.

¶ 73. But when the Son of Man shall come with great power and glory with His saints and to be admired in all the ages of His power with Him (Matt. 25: 31 ff; 2 Thess. 1: 7—10) then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, etc. Those that here on earth practiced faith, righteousness, love and mercy shall have praise and glory and immortality with the Lord, in whose presence is fulness of joy; at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angles, etc. These are the unfaithful, the unmerciful, the unrighteous that have not been obedient to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, but have obeyed un-

righteousness. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. Rev. 20 7—15; Rom. 2: 4—16; Matt. 25: 31—46; Mk. 9: 46; 2 Thess. 1: 7—9; Matt. 18: 34; Rev. ch. 21; ch. 22: 1—5; Psa. 16: 11; Psa. 103.

¶ 74. The Lord Jesus saith, Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh. Matt. 25: 13.

¶ 75. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

CONCLUSION.

¶ 76. Every confession of faith, as every other teaching and exposition of Scripture is subject at all times to examination and estimation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, according to the Holy Scriptures (the inspired,* canonical** books of the Old and New Testament as a whole) the only infallible written preserved resource of the necessary and sufficient revelation of God to humanity for our salvation. Acts ch. 15; John 10: 35; Psa. 119: 96; Luk. 24: 27, 44; 2 Pet. 1: 20, 21; Deut. 18: 15, 19; Acts 3: 22; John 12: 49—50; 2 Pet. 1: 16—18; Matt. 10: 40; Luk. 10: 16; John 14: 26; John 15: 15; cf. III. "Regel und Richtschnur"; Psa. 119: 105; 1 John 2: 27.

* "Inspired" means prompted by the Holy Spirit.

** "Canonical" means serving as rule and standard.

MENNONITE BRETHREN
CONFESSION OF FAITH

1975

Preface

The Mennonite Brethren Church has throughout its history emphasized biblical authority in all matters of faith and practice. This emphasis exalts the centrality of Scripture and counsels a proper use of creedal statements and confessions of faith as expressions of our understanding of Scripture. Such documents are to be regarded as descriptive more than normative. They are never to be given equal status with the Bible.

The Mennonite Brethren Church is historically and theologically rooted in evangelical Mennonite-Anabaptism of the sixteenth century Reformation which sought to recapture the faith and life of the New Testament church. Our forefathers agreed with Menno Simons, after whom Mennonites are named, that "No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). Numerous confessions in the Anabaptist tradition were used in the preparation of the first Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith.

A confession such as this one is an expression of the biblical ideals of the brotherhood, revised from time to time, reflecting the faith which such a fellowship believes and preaches. Its validity depends on its biblical character; its usefulness depends on its ability to communicate our understanding of the biblical message. The Mennonite Brethren Church accepts God's revelation in Scripture to be trustworthy and authoritative.

Since the nature and mission of the church call for a concise statement of what a brotherhood believes, the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches has undertaken to rewrite the Confession of Faith to make it more readable. May it serve as a guide and a messenger, exhorting believers to live the faith they proclaim.

I.
God

We believe in God, the eternal Spirit, infinite in holiness, power, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, love and mercy. This one and only eternal God has revealed Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Father

We believe in God the Father, who created all things. He can be known to the extent that He has revealed Himself in word and deed as the source and sustainer of life. He is a God of love who orders all things to serve His eternal purpose. In mercy and grace He adopts as His children all who repent of their sin and trust in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

The Son

We believe in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, whom the Father sent to reconcile us to Himself and to redeem us from sin and eternal death. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin, Mary. Thus He is true God and true man according to the Scriptures. He lived a perfect, holy

and sinless life. In the redemptive purpose of God, He suffered crucifixion and death for our sin. He rose from the dead for our justification and ascended into heaven where He now intercedes for all who believe. He will come again to judge the living and the dead and to establish His eternal Kingdom.

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, one with the Father and the Son, sent by them to effect redemption in man. He convicts, regenerates, guides, teaches, rebukes, indwells, empowers, comforts, intercedes, unites believers into one body, and glorifies Christ.

Basic Scriptures cited are representative, and not exhaustive: Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4-6; Ps. 139; Is. 40; Mt. 28:19; Jn. 1:1, 18; 4:24; 15:26; Rom. 8:1-17, 26-27; 2 Cor. 3:17; 5:19; 13:14; Phil. 2:6-8; 1 Tim. 3:16; 6:15-16; Heb. 11:6; Jude 25.

II.
The Revelation
of God

We believe that God has revealed His power and deity in the created universe so that man can know Him. God revealed Himself in saving word and deed in the Old Testament and established a covenant relationship with His people. He revealed Himself supremely and finally in the Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament.

We believe that all Scripture is inspired by God as men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit. We accept the Old and New Testaments as the infallible Word of God and the authoritative Guide for the faith and life of Christian discipleship. We believe that the Old Covenant was preparatory in nature, finding its fulfillment in the New Covenant. Christ is the key to understanding the Bible; the Old Testament bears witness to Him, and He is the One whom the New Testament proclaims.

Ps. 19; 119:105; Lk. 24:27, 44; Rom. 1:18-23; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:16-21; Heb. 1:1-2; 8:5-13.

III.
Man and Sin

We believe that man was created in the image of God, sinless, and in fellowship with God, with a free will to make moral choices. But man sinned, and willfully disobeyed God, breaking fellowship with Him and bringing physical, spiritual and eternal death on the whole human race. Consequently all are sinful by nature, guilty before God and in need of forgiveness through Christ.

Gen. 1:27; 3:1-19; Mt. 19:13-15; Rom. 3:10-18; 5:12; 18:21; Eph. 2:1-3.

IV.
Salvation by Grace

We believe that there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ. The purpose of His coming was to

redeem man from the judgment and power of sin and to reconcile him to God. Through the shedding of His blood, Christ provided the one sufficient sacrifice for sin and established God's New Covenant.

We are saved by the grace of God through faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, convicts man of his sin and need for salvation. Those who repent of their sin and trust in Christ as Savior and Lord receive forgiveness. By the power of the Holy Spirit they are born into the family of God and receive the assurance of salvation. Saving faith involves a surrender of the will to Christ, a complete trust in Him, and a joyful obedience to His Word as a faithful disciple.

Acts 2:42, 46; Eph. 1:13-14, 2:8-9; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 4:12; 9:15-28; 1 Jn. 1:9.

V. The Christian Life

We believe that the Holy Spirit lives in every Christian and transforms him into the image of Christ. He empowers the believer to follow Christ and to be an effective witness for Him.

The Christian lives in fellowship with God and other believers, and joins the local church at baptism. He contributes to the building of the body of Christ with spiritual and material gifts. Nurtured through the Word, fellowship and prayer, the believer grows more Christlike, glorifies God, and is a witness for Him in everyday life.

Believers attain spiritual maturity as they yield to Christ and obey His Word. In Christ the believer puts off the former way of life with its sinful affections and lusts. He is no longer enslaved to sin and Satan. His body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and should not be defiled or abused in any way. The believer is not to be bound by the tyranny of things. He seeks to dedicate his time, talents and possessions to Christ and His kingdom. The fruit of the Spirit is to be increasingly evident in his life, especially in his relationship to others. The Holy Spirit empowers him to gain victory over sin and temptation, to live a pure life, and to do good. Yet all followers of Christ continually need the forgiving, chastening, and cleansing grace of the Lord.

Mt. 5:13-16; Jn. 12:26; 15:4-5; Rom. 6; 8:9-16; 12; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:1-4; 4:1-16; Tit. 2:11-14; Heb. 12:14; 1 Jn. 3:17-18.

VI. The Church of Christ

We believe that the church is one body, the bride of Christ, established through God's redemptive work in history. Believers from all nations, races and social classes, regenerated by faith in Christ and cleansed by His blood, are baptized by His Spirit into one body and separated to God and are members of this body, whose head is Christ. Despite diversity in congregations and denominations, the Spirit works a basic unity which results in cooperation and fellowship with believers of other Christian groups. The Scriptures, particularly the records of the New Testament church, guide believers in

questions of life and doctrine. Through His Spirit the Lord gives gifts to the church to be exercised for the upbuilding of believers and the propagation of the Gospel.

Organization

The local church is an association of believers, baptized and organized for worship, fellowship, nurture, service and witness. Each congregation regulates its own affairs. Congregations, committed to the Word of God and to this confession, affiliate as a denomination or a conference, whose polity is outlined in the constitution of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. The work of the brotherhood is conducted in a spirit of interdependence, love and submission one to another under the Lordship of Christ.

Christian Nurture and Discipline

By washing the feet of His disciples, the Lord Jesus admonished His followers to practice personal humility, seek continuous cleansing and render loving service.* Similarly, Christians today should engage in humble service, mutual exhortation and disciplined living. In the church every member is to be concerned for the welfare of fellow-members and to intercede for them in prayer. Through public teaching, sympathetic encouragement, private counseling and earnest rebuke, the church promotes constructive discipline. Believers are encouraged to live a life of Christian discipleship, and to progress toward spiritual maturity so that the church will glorify God in the world.

God's Word is the standard for church discipline. Christians living in sin must be admonished in brotherly love and sincerity. Where private counseling fails, the church exercises redemptive discipline. If warnings are disregarded and the attitude of rebellion and estrangement persists, the

* The practice of washing the saints' feet can be a meaningful reminder of our continuous need for cleansing and mutual admonition to serve one another. offender is formally excluded from the fellowship of the church. Believers, however, must continue to practice love and compassion toward the erring one in order to win him back. When he repents of his sin, the church forgives, reinstates him into fellowship and encourages him in the Christian life.

Mt. 18:15-35; Jn. 13:1-17; 17:21; Acts 2:38-44; 15:1-28; 1 Cor. 12-14; 2 Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:10-22; 5:21, 25-27; 1 Thess. 5:11, 14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; Rev. 5:9.

VII. The Mission of the Church

We believe that the command to make disciples of all nations is the primary task of the church. Every member has the responsibility to be a witness to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and to call men to be reconciled to God. The Gospel is the power of God for salvation and is able to meet the total needs of man.

Mt. 2:23; 11:5; 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:18-20.

VIII. The Christian Ministries

We believe that God, through the Holy Spirit, has endowed His children with gifts for Christian ministry. Each

member lovingly ministers to the other until all are built up to the maturity of Christ. Some members of the church have received special gifts for leadership, pastoral, preaching, teaching, evangelistic, diaconal ministries. The church prayerfully recognizes these gifts and calls these persons. They must live above reproach, faithfully teach the Word of God and express loving concern for the well-being of others. A congregation, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, may commission or ordain such servants.

The church, in turn, shall love, respect and support them. She must also be on guard to detect and correct or dismiss false teachers.

Is. 6:1-10; Jer. 3:15; Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-4; 20:28; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 3:1-10; 5:17-22; Tit. 1:5-9; 3:10; 1 Pet. 5:1-5.

IX.
Christian Baptism

We believe that Christians should obey their Lord's command to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To qualify for baptism, one must repent of sin and trust Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. We practice water baptism of the believer by immersion.

Baptism symbolizes death to sin and resurrection to the new life in Christ and the receipt of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a public commitment to discipleship. At baptism the believer enters into the full fellowship and work of the church. Local congregations may receive into fellowship those who have been baptized by another mode on their confession of faith.

Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:2-6; Col. 2:12-13; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 1 Pet. 3:21.

X.
The Lord's Supper

Members of the church observe the Lord's Supper as instituted by Christ. The elements, the bread and the fruit of the vine, symbolize Christ's broken body and shed blood. They remind us of His suffering and death for our salvation and our unity in Him.

In preparation for the fellowship of the Lord's Supper, every believer is to examine himself and partake of the elements in a worthy manner. Those who have peace with God, live in peace with their fellowmen, and have been baptized are invited to partake of the Lord's Supper, thereby testifying to His death until He comes.

The Lord's Supper expresses the fellowship and unity of believers with Christ. It is a supper of remembrance, celebration and praise which strengthens believers for true discipleship and service.

Mt. 16:24; 26:26-30; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-32; 14:26; Rev. 3:20.

XI.
Marriage and the
Christian Home

We believe that God instituted marriage for the intimate companionship of husband and wife, and for the procreation

and nurture of children. In marriage two mature partners find fulfillment in sharing mutual love, concerns, joys, ideals, ambitions and responsibilities. Those who marry should share a common Christian commitment; a believer should not marry an unbeliever. We believe that divorce constitutes a basic violation of God's intention for marriage.

Christian parents should nurture their children through exemplary godly living, by praying for them, by leading them in family worship, by teaching them the Scriptures, and by training and disciplining them in a manner pleasing to the Lord.

Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18-24; Prov. 5:18-19; Mal. 2:13-16; Mt. 5:31-32; 19:4-9; 1 Cor. 7:10-11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:22-23, 6:4; Heb. 13:4.

XII.
The Lord's Day
and Work

We believe that God intended man to work diligently and honestly in his chosen vocation. The Christian should continually seek to build God's Kingdom through his work.

Following the New Testament example, believers commemorate the resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the first day of the week. On the Lord's Day believers occupy themselves especially with worship and instruction in the Word, Christian fellowship and service and refreshing themselves in body and soul, and limiting their labor to work of necessity and deeds of mercy.

Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-10; Mt. 6:33; Lk. 24:1-36; Acts 2:1; 20:7; Rom. 14:5-6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Thess. 4:11-12; Heb. 10:23-25.

XIII.
Christian Integrity

Although the swearing of oaths was permitted in Old Testament times, it is forbidden by Christ. Christians are obligated to speak the truth because they are always in the presence of God. Therefore we simply affirm the truth in legal transactions. Because lodges and secret societies require the use of oaths and also because they foster the formation of intimate alliances with unbelievers, we discourage membership in secret societies but rather seek to promote fellowship and brotherhood in the church.

Mt. 5:33-37; 23:1-12; Jn. 18:19-23; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:6-13; Jas. 5:12.

XIV.
The State

We believe that God instituted the state to maintain law and order in civil life and to promote public welfare. The functions and responsibilities of the state are distinct from those of the church. The chief concern and primary allegiance

of all Christians should be to Christ's kingdom. It is our Christian duty to pray for those in government and to proclaim truth, love, righteousness and redemption. We should respect those in authority, exercise social responsibility, witness against corruption, discrimination and injustice, pay taxes and obey all laws that do not conflict with the Word of God.

Mt. 22:17-21; Acts 4:19; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-6; 1 Pet. 2:13-14.

XV. Love and Nonresistance

We believe that Christians should live by the law of love and practice the forgiveness of enemies as taught and exemplified by the Lord Jesus. The church, as the body of Christ, is a fellowship of redeemed, separated people, controlled by redemptive love. Its evangelistic responsibility is to present Christ, the Prince of Peace, as the answer to human need, enmity and violence. The evil, brutal and inhuman nature of war stands in contradiction to the new nature of the Christian. The Christian seeks to practice Christ's law of love in all relationships, and in all situations, including those involving personal injustice, social upheaval and international tensions. We believe that it is not God's will that Christians take up arms in military service but that, where possible, they perform alternate service to reduce strife, alleviate suffering and bear witness to the love of Christ.

Ex. 20:1-17; Mt. 5:17-28, 38-45; Rom. 12:19-21; 13:8-10; 1 Pet. 2:19-23.

XVI. Christ's Final Triumph

We believe that God who acts in history will bring His purposes to a final consummation. At death the righteous enter a state of rest in the presence of God, in fellowship with Christ. The unrighteous suffer the torment of separation from God while awaiting final judgment.

When the Lord returns, living believers will be raptured and the dead in Christ will be resurrected to be with Him forever. Christ will judge all men. The righteous will inherit the kingdom of God and the unrighteous shall suffer the anguish of eternal hell. In the end, death will be destroyed, Anti-Christ will be defeated and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire. Christ will create a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness reigns, and God shall be all in all. This is the blessed hope of the church.

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (Mt. 25:13). He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon! Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20).

Is. 2:4; 61:1-11; Mt. 25:13, 31-46; Mk. 9:43-48; Lk. 16:22-23; Jn. 5:25-29; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor. 15:21-58; Phil. 1:21-24; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Tit. 2:11-14; 2 Pet. 3:3-13; Rev. 1:15, 20-22.

THE SMALLER MENNONITE
AND
RELATED CONFESSIONAL TRADITIONS

Vorwort.

Glaubensbekenntnis

—: der :—

Mennoniten

—: in :—

Manitoba, Nordamerika.

1. Kor. 3, 11. „Einen andern Grund kann zwar niemand legen, außer dem, der gelegt ist, welcher ist Jesus Christus.“

Röm. 10, 10. „Denn so man von Herzen glaubt, so wird man gerecht, und so man mit dem Munde bekennt, so wird man selig.“

In nachfolgenden Blättern übergebe ich der Gemeinde unser Glaubensbekenntnis, wie wir es jährlich in Artikeln beim Taufunterrichte der Jugend vortragen. Schon lange machte sich in unserer Gemeinde bei einigen Gliedern das Bedürfnis fühlbar, unser Glaubensbekenntnis, auf welches wir die heilige Taufe empfangen, nicht bloß in der gottesdienstlichen Versammlung einige Male im Jahr zu hören, sondern es auch selbst zu haben, um es lesen und mit dem Worte Gottes, aus dem es geschöpft ist, vergleichen zu können, damit wir in demselben immer fester gegründet werden und wir allezeit bereit seien zur Verantwortung gegen jedermann, der Grund fordert der Hoffnung, die in uns ist. 1. Petri 3, 15. Um nun diesem Bedürfnis abzuhelpen und in einem geringen Teile auch hierdurch zur Erbauung unserer Gemeinde beizutragen, fühle ich mich zur Herausgabe dieser Bekenntnisschrift veranlaßt, die einen gewünschten Anhang zu unserem Katechismus bildet und mit diesem zusammen unserer Jugend, die sich zur heiligen Taufe vorbereitet, die Gelegenheit darbietet, sich auch zu Hause, wenn sie allein ist, immer näher mit der göttlichen Wahrheit vertraut zu machen, die ihr im Gotteshause verkündigt wird. Der Heiland Jesus Christus wolle den Gebrauch dieser Blätter an vielen Herzen dergestalt segnen, daß sie nicht bloß die Erkenntnis der Wahrheit unter uns immer mehr verbreiten, sondern daß dieselbe vielmehr in den Herzen auch eine Gotteskraft zum ewigen Leben werde, die sich in Wort und Wandel offenbart. Das gebe Gottes Gnade. Amen.

Johannes Wiebe,
Ältester der Gemeinde zu Reinland, in Manitoba.

Rosengart, am 27. Juni 1881.

1. Artikel.

Von Gott, dem Schöpfer aller Dinge,

Glauben wir denn von Herzen und bekennen auch mit dem Munde, mit allen frommen Altvätern und Propheten und auserwählten Kindern Gottes, die von Anfang der Welt gelebt, nach Anleitung der Heiligen Schrift, an einen ewigen, allmächtigen und unbegreiflichen Gott, der da hat den Himmel, die Erde, alle sichtbaren und unsichtbaren Dinge erschaffen, nach 1. Mose 1. Und durch sein kräftig Wort unterhält, regiert und trägt er alle Dinge. Er ist ein heilig, vollkommen und unbegreiflich geistlich Wesen, wie der Heiland selber sagt in Joh. 4: Gott ist ein Geist, und die ihn anbeten, die müssen ihn im Geist und in der Wahrheit anbeten. Er besteht aus sich selber und hat keine Hilfe von jemand nötig, wie Paulus sagt: Sein wird auch nicht von Menschenhänden gepflegt, als der jemand bedürfe, so er jedermann Leben und Odem allenthalben giebt, laut Apstg. 17, 25. Er ist ewig, ohne Anfang und Ende, ein ewiger und allmächtiger Gott, ein Herr der himmlischen Heerscharen, ein König über alle Könige; über uns alle und in uns allen, nach Eph. 4. Ein erschrecklicher Richter, ein verzehrend Feuer, ein eifriger Gott, der die Missethat der Väter heimsucht bis in das dritte und vierte Glied, nach 5. Mose 4. Er ist aufrichtig, rechtfertig und heilig, gnädig ist er und ein Gott der Liebe und des Friedens, voller Güte und Barmherzigkeit. Er ist ein Gott, den niemand gesehen hat, noch sehen kann, und wohnet in einem Lichte, wozu niemand kommen kann, nach 1. Tim. 6. Der Himmel ist sein Stuhl und die Erde ist seiner Füße Schemel. Jes. 66. Er ist überall gegenwärtig, er sieht alle Dinge, und es kann sich kein Mensch so heimlich verbergen, daß ihn dieser heilige Gott nicht sieht. Niemand kann ihn betrügen noch in seinem Herzen etwas denken, welches er nicht alles weiß, denn es ist alles bloß und entdeckt vor seinen Augen. Heb. 4. Von solchem überall gegenwärtigen Gott reden wir, der giebt seine Ehre auch keinem andern, noch seinen Ruhm den Götzen. Denn so heißt es in Jes. 42: Ich, der Herr, will meine Ehre keinem andern geben, noch meinen Ruhm den Götzen. Denn er ist allein Gott und niemand mehr. Alles muß seinem Befehl gehorsam sein, ja die Engel stehen vor ihm mit Beben, nach 4. Esra 8, 21. Tausendmal tausend heilige Engel dienen ihm und zehntausendmal zehntausend stehen vor ihm. Dan. 7, 10. Sein Wort ist wahrhaftig und sein Befehl ist stark; wenn er spricht, so geschieht es, und wenn er gebeut, so steht es da. Und vor ihm sollen sich beugen alle Kniee und alle Zungen bekennen und sagen: In dem Herrn allein haben wir Gerechtigkeit und Stärke. Diesem Gott müssen wir im lebendigen Glauben anhängen und gehorsam sein. Denn, wollen wir lernen, unsern Gott „Abba, lieber Vater“ nennen, so sind wir

auch schuldig, ihm den kindlichen Gehorsam zu beweisen und ihn von ganzem Herzen, aus allen Kräften und ganzem Gemüte zu lieben und zu dienen, nach Matth. 22.

2. Artikel.

Vom Sohne Gottes

Glauben und bekennen wir, daß da ist ein Sohn des ewigen Vaters, der genannt wird das Wort, das von Ewigkeit bei Gott, seinem himmlischen Vater, gewesen ist, der Glanz und Herrlichkeit seines Vaters, nach Heb. 1. Durch welchen die Welt und alle Dinge geschaffen, wie der Evangelist Johannes (Kap. 1) beschreibt: Im Anfang war das Wort, und das Wort war bei Gott, und Gott war das Wort, und dasselbige war im Anfang bei Gott. Alle Dinge sind durch dasselbige gemacht, und ohne dasselbige ist nichts gemacht, das gemacht ist. Und die Epistel an die Hebräer bezeugt im 1. Kapitel: Nachdem Gott vorzeiten manchmal und auf mancherlei Weise geredet hat zu den Vätern durch die Propheten, nun hat er am letzten, in diesen Tagen, zu uns geredet durch seinen Sohn, welchen er gesetzt hat zum Erben über alles, durch welchen er auch die Welt gemacht hat. Denn durch ihn ist alles erschaffen, was im Himmel und auf Erden ist, das Sichtbare und das Unsichtbare, Throne und Herrschaften und Fürstentümer, es ist alles durch ihn und zu ihm geschaffen, nach Kol. 1, 16. David sagt, Psalm 33, 6: Der Himmel ist durch das Wort des Herrn gemacht und alle sein Heer durch den Geist seines Mundes. Und der Apostel Paulus sagt in Eph. 3, 9, daß Gott hat alle Dinge geschaffen durch Jesum Christum. Darum wir ihn auch mit Thomas, nach Johannes 20, für unsern Herrn und Gott bekennen, und mit Petrus und Nathanael, daß er ist Christus, des lebendigen Gottes Sohn, welcher ist das Ebenbild des unsichtbaren Gottes und der Erstgeborne aller Kreaturen. Kol. 1, 15. Darum ist auch dem Menschen kein ander Heil gegeben, worin er mag selig werden, als allein in dem Namen Jesu, nach Apstg. 4. Ja, wir bekennen, daß er ist der wahrhaftige Gott und das ewige Leben, unser einziger Herr, Heiland, Erlöser und Seligmacher.

3. Artikel.

Vom Heiligen Geist

Glauben und bekennen wir auch den Heiligen Geist, den Geist der Wahrheit, der vom Vater ausgeht. Joh. 15. Von diesem Geist sagt David in Ps. 33: Der Himmel ist durch das Wort des Herrn gemacht und alle sein Heer durch den Geist seines Mundes. Er ist der rechte Tröster der betrübten Herzen, die Kraft Gottes aus der Höhe. Luk. 24. Dieser Heilige Geist leitet uns in alle Wahrheit und alle, die von diesem Geist Gottes getrieben werden, das sind Gottes Kinder. Röm. 8. Und es kann auch niemand Jesum einen Herrn heißen ohne die-

sen Heiligen Geist; durch diesen Geist untersucht der Mensch alle Dinge, auch die Tiefen der Gottheit, nach 1. Kor. 2, 10. Dieser Geist Gottes giebt Zeugnis unserm Geiste, daß wir Gottes Kinder sind. Dieser Heilige Geist vermag alle Dinge; er untersucht alles und geht durch alle Geister, wie verständig, lauter und scharf sie seien (Buch der Weisheit 7, 23), so daß ihm auch alle göttlichen Eigenschaften zugeschrieben werden. Durch diesen Heiligen Geist haben die heiligen Männer Gottes geredet, getrieben von dem Heiligen Geist, laut 2. Petri 1, 21. Ja, er trieb die Apostel des Herrn, zu reden mit andern Zungen und die Thaten Gottes hoch zu preisen vor allem Volk. Apstg. 2. Er ist der Geist des Herrn, der Geist der Weisheit und des Verstandes, der Geist des Rats und der Stärke, nach Jes. 11, 2. Und durch ihn sei dem Vater und unserm Herrn Jesum Christum Lob und Preis in alle Ewigkeit. Amen.

4. Artikel.

Vom dreieinigen Gott

Glauben und bekennen wir, daß Gott Vater, Sohn und Heiliger Geist ein einiger, allmächtiger Gott ist, wie Johannes spricht, 1. Joh. 5, 7: Drei sind, die da zeugen im Himmel, der Vater, das Wort und der Heilige Geist, und diese drei sind eins; nicht nur eins oder einige, sondern vollkommen eins sowohl im Wirken, Wollen und Vollbringen, in gleicher Ehre und Herrlichkeit, der eine nicht ohne andern, gleich ewig; nicht drei Personen oder Götter, sondern nur ein Gott, dergleichen nirgends ist, der mit seinem Worte oder Weisheit allgegenwärtig ist. Und gleichwie unser Gott ein unbegreiflich Wesen und ein unbegreiflicher Gott ist, also sind auch diese Dinge für uns unbegreiflich, aber dennoch gläubig, denn dieser dreieinige Gott ist ungeschieden, welches wir an des Herrn Jesu eigenen Worten deutlich abnehmen können, als Philippus den Herrn Christum fragte: Herr, zeige uns den Vater, so genüget uns. Jesus spricht zu ihm: So lange bin ich bei euch, Philippi, wer mich siehet, der siehet den Vater; glaubest du nicht, daß ich im Vater und der Vater in mir ist? Und in Joh. 12, 14 spricht der Herr Jesus: Wer an mich glaubt, der glaubt nicht an mich, sondern an den, der mich gesandt hat, und nach Joh. 10, 30 sagt der liebste Heiland: Ich und der Vater sind eins. Er sagt nicht: einige, sondern eins, und wenn der Apostel Paulus seinen Gläubigen das Gute antwünschen will, so segnet er sie auch mit diesem dreieinigen Gott und spricht: Die Gnade unseres Herrn Jesu Christi, die Liebe Gottes und die Gemeinschaft des Heiligen Geistes sei mit euch allen. Amen.

5. Artikel.

Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi

Glauben und bekennen wir, wie die ganze Schrift davon zeugt, daß er, der Herr Jesus, ohne

Anfang, und von Gott geboren, und bei Gott gewesen ist. Da aber die Zeit erfüllt, die Gott zur Erlösung des ganzen menschlichen Geschlechtes bestimmt, ist er, von Gott gesandt, durch den Heiligen Geist in der Jungfrau empfangen. Nach der göttlichen Verheißung Jesaja 7, 14 und in Luk. 1, 35 spricht der Engel zu Maria, wie sie sich wunderte, wie solches zugehen könnte, da sie von keinem Manne wußte: Der Heilige Geist wird über dich kommen, und die Kraft des Höchsten wird dich überschatten; darum auch das Heilige, das von dir geboren wird, wird Gottes Sohn genannt werden. Ist also um unsertwillen Fleisch und Mensch geworden. Darum auch der Apostel Paulus verwundert ausruft, wenn er, 1. Tim. 3, 16, spricht: Kindlich groß ist das göttliche Geheimnis, Gott ist geoffenbaret im Fleisch, Jesus Christus ist in das Fleisch gekommen. 1. Joh. 4. Er hat sich selbst geäußert und Knechtsgestalt an sich genommen, ist geworden als ein anderer Mensch und an Gebärden als ein Mensch erfunden. Phil. 2. Doch rein und unbefleckt und ohne Sünde, nach Heb. 4. Ist nicht irdisch wie der erste Adam, sondern der Herr vom Himmel. 1. Kor. 15. Er ist vom Vater ausgegangen und in die Welt gekommen. Wiederum hat er die Welt verlassen und ist zu seinem himmlischen Vater gegangen, nach Joh. 6. Und dieses hat er alles um unsertwillen gethan, weil wir sonst ewig in Gottes Zorn und Ungnade geblieben, darin wir alle mit Adam gefallen waren. Glauben und bekennen also von der Menschwerdung und Erniedrigung des Herrn Jesu, daß der Herr Jesus nichts durch seine Erniedrigung von seiner göttlichen Hoheit und Eigenschaft beraubt gewesen oder verloren, sondern in ihm wohnte die Fülle der Gottheit leibhaftig, nach Kol. 2. Und ist wahrer Gott und Mensch in einer Person, und hat uns alle durch seine Erniedrigung errettet und wieder gebracht, was wir in Adam verloren. Denn Gott hatte den Menschen geschaffen zum ewigen Leben, aber durch der Teufels Neid ist der Tod in die Welt gekommen. Buch der Weisheit 2, 23. 24. Da der Mensch also von Gott, durch des Satans Neid und List, gefallen, da erbarmte sich Gott in seiner ewigen Liebe über ihn und verhieß ihm, daß des Weibes Samen der Schlange den Kopf zertreten sollte. 1. Mose 3, 15. Ja, es jammerte seiner allerheiligsten Liebe, daß sein herrliches Ebenbild sollte verloren gehen. Darum ist der Herr Jesus auf Erden gekommen und Mensch geworden, damit er dem Menschen wieder helfen und ihn selig machen kann, denn sein ganzer heiliger Wandel auf Erden ist lauter Liebe gewesen, womit er den Menschen geliebt hat; denn mit seiner heiligen Kindheit, daß er auf Erden als ein Kind geboren ist, hat er unsere Kindheit getragen, auf daß unsere Kinder in ihrer Unschuld durch seine heilige Unschuld können selig werden; hat auch getragen unsere Fehler und Gebrechen durch seinen heiligen Wandel: denn er ist uns von Gott gemacht zur Weisheit, zur Gerechtigkeit, zur Heiligung und zur Erlösung, nach 1. Kor. 1, 30. Er ist auch um unserer Sünde willen getötet, gestorben und begraben

ben und um unserer Gerechtigkeit auferweckt. Röm. 4. Darum hat ihn Gott auch erhöht und hat ihm einen Namen gegeben, welcher über alle Namen ist, daß in dem Namen Jesu sich beugen sollen aller derer Kniee, die im Himmel und auf Erden und unter der Erde sind, und alle Zungen bekennen, daß Jesus Christus der Herr sei, zur Ehre Gottes, des Vaters. Phil. 2. Wir sagen zum Beschluß dieses Artikels: Dem Herrn Jesu sei Dank für seine Erniedrigung, die er um unfertwillen gethan hat, und hat uns durch sein Blut erkaufte zu Erben seines Himmelreichs. Ihm sei mit seinem himmlischen Vater und durch den Heiligen Geist ewig Dank für seine Liebe. Amen.

6. Artikel.

Von der Gemeinde Gottes

Bekennen wir auch, daß Gott von Anfang der Welt eine sichtbare Gemeinde, oder ein Volk, das er geliebt, allezeit gehabt und noch hat, und bis zum Ende der Welt haben wird, welches er angefangen hat mit Adam und Eva im Paradiese. Nachher hat er die frommen Altväter mit ihren Häusern für seine Gemeinde gehalten, mit Noah wieder erneuert und mit Abraham einen Bund gemacht, ihn und seinen Samen zu seinem Volk und Eigentum erwählt. 1. Mose 17. Dies war die Gemeinde des Alten Testaments, der Samen Abrahams, des Geschlechts Isaaks und die Nachkommen von Jakob oder die Juden unter dem Gesetz. Da aber in der Fülle der Zeit der Herr Jesus mit dem gnadenreichen Evangelium gekommen, da sandte er seine Jünger aus in die ganze Welt, durch das Predigen des Evangeliums sich eine Gemeinde aus allerlei Volk und Zungen zuzubereiten, die sich von Herzen bekehren und an Gott und Jesum Christum glauben, ja, die zusammen haben einen Glauben, eine Taufe. Eph. 4. Die zu einem Leibe getauft und in einem Glauben durch Christum mit Gott im Himmel vereinigt sind und Christum durch den Glauben in ihren Herzen wohnen haben, nach Eph. 3, 17. Die Gott fürchten und recht thun. Apstg. 10. Und also in die Gemeinschaft der Heiligen einverleibt, die zusammen ohne Ansehen der Person ein Herz und eine Seele seien, durch Jesum Christum sich in der Liebe tragen und sich im Gebet vor Gott beistehen, das ist die Gemeinde, die sich Gott, nach Apstg. 1, aus allen Völkern und Zungen erwählt hat. Nämlich die Gott fürchten, lieben und recht thun, und darum sagt auch der Apostel Paulus, daß sich der Herr Jesus eine Gemeinde erworben hat, durch sein eigen Blut und hat sie gereinigt durchs Wasserbad im Wort, auf daß er sie ihm selbst darstellte eine Gemeinde, die herrlich sei, die nicht habe einen Flecken noch Runzel oder des etwas, sondern daß sie heilig sei und unsträflich, nach Eph. 5, 26. 27. Diese Gemeinde wird denn auch genannt das Haus und der Tempel des lebendigen Gottes. 1. Kor. 3. Die ist erbaut auf den Grund der Apostel und Propheten, davon Christus der Eckstein ist. Eph.

2, 20. Die Gemeinde wird auch erkannt an ihrem schriftmäßigen Glauben, der durch die Liebe thätig ist. Gal. 5, 6. An der reinen schriftmäßigen Lehre und Liebe, die sie untereinander haben (Joh. 13) und an dem gottseligen guten Wandel, den sie untereinander haben, und an dem Unterhalten der Gebote Gottes, die Jesus, ihr Haupt, sie gelehrt hat. Wir wünschen zum Beschluß, daß der Herr Jesus, nach seiner Verheißung, bei seiner Gemeinde, oder allen rechtgläubigen Christen, sein und bleiben möge bis an der Welt Ende, nach Matth. 28, auf daß keine Gewalt des Satans, noch die Pforten der Hölle sie überwältigen mögen, nach Matth. 16. Ja, daß wir zur rechten Erkenntnis Jesu Christi und in die rechte Gemeinschaft mit Gott gelangen möchten, dieses wünschen wir allen, wie uns Unwürdigen von Herzen. Amen.

7. Artikel.

Von der Erwählung der Lehrer und Diener

Glauben und bekennen wir auch, daß der Herr Jesus in seiner Gemeinde verordnet und eingesetzt hat Hirten, Älteste, Lehrer und Diakonen, die die Gemeinde Gottes regieren, mit guter Lehr und Leben vorgehen sollen. Diese müssen denn auch durch eine ordentliche Wahl oder Beruf nach dem Exempel der Heiligen Schrift erwählt werden. In Matth. 10 lesen wir, daß der Herr Jesus zwölf von seinen Jüngern erwählte und sie aussandte, das Evangelium zu predigen. In der Apostelgeschichte, im 1. Kapitel, finden wir, daß die Apostel zwei erwählten und stellten sie dar an der Stelle des Verräters Judas, daß sie dann den Matthias durchs Los trafen. Daß diese Erwählung zu halten sehr notwendig ist, und daß keine Gemeinde ohne ordentlich erwählte Lehrer bestehen kann, können wir deutlich sehen in 2. Tim. 2, 1, wo der Apostel Paulus an seinen Timotheus schreibt: So sei nun stark, mein Sohn, durch die Gnade, die in Christo Jesu ist, und was du von mir gehört hast, durch viele Zeugen das befehl treuen Männern, die da tüchtig seien, andere zu lehren. Und an Titus schreibt er, Kap. 1: Darum lasse ich dich in Kreta, daß du es sollst vollends verrichten, da ich es gelassen habe, und besetzen die Städte hin und her mit Ältesten, wie ich dir befohlen habe. Wie nun ein Ältester in der Gemeinde beschaffen sein solle, so schreibt der Apostel, daß sie sollen untadelig sein, eines Weibes Mann, der gläubige Kinder hat, und nicht berüchtigt, daß sie Schwelger und ungehorsam sind, denn ein Bischof soll unsträflich sein als ein Haushalter Gottes, nicht eigensinnig, nicht zornig, nicht ein Weinsäufer, nicht pochen, nicht unehrliche Hantierung treiben; sondern gastfrei, gütig, züchtig, gerecht, heilig und keusch. Und halten ob dem Wort, das gewiß ist, und lehren kann, und mächtig zu ermahnen durch die heilsamen Lehren, und zu strafen die Widersprecher. Von den Dienern schreibt er, daß sie sollen ehrbar sein, nicht zweizüngig, nicht Weinsäufer, sondern die das Geheimnis des Glau-

bens in einem reinen Gewissen haben, und dieselben lasse man zuvor untersuchen, darnach läßt man sie dienen, wenn sie unsträflich seien. 1. Tim. 3. Woraus wir denn sehen können, daß die Gemeinde ohne Hirten und Lehrer nicht bestehen kann. Denn Salomo sagt in seinen weisen Sprüchen, Kap. 29, 18: Wenn die Weissagung aus ist, wird das Volk wild und wüste. Damit aber solche Erwählung nach dem Willen Gottes und zur Erbauung der Gemeinde gereichen mag, so muß sich die Gemeinde denn dazu bereiten, mit gottesfürchtigem Fasten und Beten, und Gott ernstlich anrufen, daß er als ein Herzenstündiger anzeigen wolle, welchen er zu diesem Dienste erwählt und bereitet hat, im festen Vertrauen, daß der Herr durch seinen Heiligen Geist seine Mitwirkung hierin wolle erscheinen lassen.

8. Artikel.

Von der heiligen Taufe

Glauben und bekennen wir auch, daß der Herr Jesus in seiner Gemeinde eingesetzt und zu unterhalten befohlen, auf das Bekenntnis des Glaubens mit Wasser zu taufen. Denn solches lesen wir in Matth. 28 und Mark. 16, daß der Herr Jesus seine Jünger mit diesem Befehl ausgesandt hat: Gehet hin in alle Welt, lehret alle Völker und taufet sie im Namen des Vaters, und des Sohnes, und des Heiligen Geistes, und lehret sie halten alles, was ich euch befohlen habe, mit diesem Trost: Wer da glaubet und getauft wird, der wird selig werden, wer aber nicht glaubet, der wird verdammt werden. Diesem Befehle haben die Apostel des Herrn treulich gefolgt, denn wir lesen in der Apostelgeschichte im 2. Kapitel, da die Apostel nach der Himmelfahrt Christi zu Jerusalem am Pfingstfeste versammelt und der Heilige Geist über sie ausgegossen ward, daß Petrus dem Volke den Glauben an Jesum Christum, von seinem Leiden, Sterben und Auferstehen verkündigt hat, ja aus der Schrift und den Psalmen ihnen kräftig bewiesen hat, daß er der verheißene Heiland, Messias und Seligmacher der Menschen war. Da heißt es, ging's ihnen durchs Herz, und sie sprachen zu Petrus und den andern Aposteln: Ihr Männer, lieben Brüder, was sollen wir thun? Petrus sprach zu ihnen: Thut Buße, und lasse sich ein jeglicher taufen auf den Namen Jesu Christi, zur Vergebung der Sünden, so werdet ihr die Gaben des Heiligen Geistes empfangen, denn euch und eurer Kinder ist diese Verheißung und aller, die noch ferne sind, welche Gott, unser Herr, herzurufen wird. Und mit vielen andern Worten ermahnte er sie und sprach: „Lasset euch helfen von diesen unartigen Leuten. Die nun sein Wort gerne annahmen, ließen sich taufen, und wurden an dem Tag der Gemeinde zugethan bei dreitausend Seelen, welche beständig blieben in der Apostel Lehre, in der Gemeinschaft und im Brotbrechen und im Gebet.“ Hier könnte noch viel angeführt werden, daß die Apostel Gläubige getauft haben, welches gottliebende Herzen nachschlagen

können. Apstg. 18, 8. Von Crispus, dem Obersten der Schule, von Korneli, dem Hauptmann, und Kap. 8 von dem Rämmerer der Königin Candace aus Mohrenland und vielen Orten mehr, welche alle nicht anders als auf das Bekenntnis ihres Glaubens die Taufe empfangen haben. Sehet, geliebte Freunde in Christo, aus diesem allen können wir sehen, daß der Herr Jesus befohlen hat zu lehren und zu taufen; und zweitens, daß die Apostel des Herrn niemand getauft, der nicht an den Herrn Jesum geglaubt, denselben bekannt und die Taufe begehrt hat. Drittens, daß, wer ein Jünger Christi sein will und ihn für seinen Herrn, Heiland und Seligmacher erkennen und annehmen und ein Glied an seinem Leibe sein will, derselbe sich auch muß taufen lassen und sich nicht weiser achten als der Herr Jesus, der sich selber von Johannes im Jordan hat taufen lassen, nach Matth. 3, 13. Der Herr Jesus sagt in Joh. 8: Ihr seid meine rechten Jünger, so ihr thut alles, was ich euch befohlen habe. Denn wer dieses verachtet und im Kleinen nicht getreu ist, der ist auch im Großen nicht getreu, wie der Herr Jesus selber sagt in Luk. 16. Möchte aber jemand denken oder fragen: Was ist denn die Taufe oder was bezeichnet sie und was nützet sie? dem antworten wir: Die Taufe bezeichnet uns die Abwaschung von Sünden, die durch das Blut Christi geschehen ist; denn so wie das Wasser zur Reinigung des Leibes dient, also nimmt das Blut Jesu Christi auch weg alle Sünden denen, die sich recht gläubig und bußfertig in der Taufe einstellen, und reinigt ihr Gewissen von den toten Werken, zu dienen dem lebendigen Gott, laut Ebr. 9. Ja, der Apostel sagt, daß die Taufe uns selig macht, nämlich wenn wir unsern alten Menschen töten und ihn durch den Tod Christi begraben, und dieses nicht durch die natürliche Kraft des Wassers oder des Unflats am Fleisch, sondern durch den Bund eines guten Gewissens mit Gott. Zweitens wird die bußfertige Seele in der Gemeinde oder in der Gemeinschaft Christi auf- und angenommen, denn Paulus sagt, 1. Kor. 12: Wir sind durch einen Geist zu einem Leibe getauft, und dieser Leib ist die Gemeinde Gottes. Drittens, so zieht man Christum durch den Glauben an und wird seines Leidens und Verdienstes theilhaftig. Wie viel eurer getauft sind, spricht der Apostel Paulus in Gal. 3, die haben Christum angezogen, ja diejenigen ziehen Christum durch die Taufe an, die da verändert werden nach dem inwendigen Menschen, die die Sünde nicht mehr herrschen lassen in ihren sterblichen Leibern, ihr Gehorsam zu leisten in ihren Lüsten, nach Röm. 6. Die um der Liebe Jesu alles für Schaden und Dreck achten, hingegen alle Seelenkräfte dazu anwenden, daß sie Jesum von Herzen über alles lieben mögen, auf daß Gott, der Herr, geheiligt werde in ihrem Herzen. 1. Pet. 3. Teuerste Seelen! Die sind denn in Christi Tod getauft und mit ihm begraben durch die Taufe in den Tod, auf daß gleichwie Christus ist auferstanden von den Toten durch die Herrlichkeit des Vaters, also sollen sie auch in einem neuen Leben wandeln, nach Röm. 6.

Schließe also den Artikel von der Wassertaufe und wünsche, daß der große Gott allen denen, die im Vornehmen stehen, dazu überzugehen, ihre Herzen wolle würdig und geschickt machen, daß sie im lebendigen Glauben und rechter Erkenntnis kommen möchten, damit sie Gott in Christo wolle würdigen und mit dem Heiligen Geist inwendig mit Feuer taufen. Daß dies Gott gebe, wünschen wir von Herzen.

9. Artikel.

Vom Abendmahl

Glauben und bekennen wir auch, daß der Herr Jesus seinen Gläubigen zu unterhalten befohlen, ein Abendmahl mit Brot und Wein, zum Gedächtnis seines unschuldigen, teuerwürdigen Leidens und Sterbens, welches er für uns sündige Menschen vollbracht hat, da er sich aus großer Liebe für uns am Stamme des Kreuzes geopfert und willig in den Tod gegeben hat als ein Lamm, welches der Welt Sünden trägt (1. Joh. 1) und durch welchen wir haben die Erlösung durch sein Blut, nämlich die Vergebung der Sünden, nach Kol. 1. Dieses Abendmahl hat der Herr Jesus nicht allein eingesetzt und seinen Jüngern zu unterhalten befohlen, sondern er hat es auch selbst mit seinen Jüngern unterhalten und das in der Nacht, da er von Judas Ischarioth verraten wurde. Da sprach er zu seinen Jüngern: Mich hat herzlich verlangt, das Osterlamm mit euch zu essen, ehe denn ich leide. Und er nahm das Brot, dankte und brach's, und gab es seinen Jüngern und sprach: Nehmet, esset, das ist mein Leib, der für euch gegeben wird. Desgleichen nahm er auch den Kelch nach dem Abendmahl und sprach: Trinket alle daraus, das ist mein Blut des Neuen Testaments, das für euch vergossen wird zur Vergebung der Sünden, nach Matth. 26. Desgleichen sagt auch Paulus (Kol. 11), daß in der Nacht, da der Herr Jesus verraten ward, hat er das Brot genommen und gebrochen, seinem himmlischen Vater gedankt und seinen Jüngern ausgeteilt, desgleichen auch den Kelch nach dem Abendmahl genommen und ihnen gegeben. Und machet also den Schluß seiner Rede: So oft ihr von diesem Brot esset und von diesem Kelch trinket, sollt ihr des Herrn Tod verkündigen, bis daß er kommt. Was aber durch das Brotbrechen und Austeilen des Weins im Abendmahl bezeichnet wird, ist dieses: Gleichwie Brot und Wein zur Nahrung des Leibes dienen, also werden unsere Seelen durch den Leib und das Blut Christi ernährt, gespeist und zum ewigen Leben erhalten. Und darum, liebste Seelen, müssen wir kein Vertrauen auf die äußerlichen Zeichen, sondern vielmehr auf das wahre Wesen selbst setzen, denn äußerlich mit dem Munde genießen wir nichts anderes denn natürlich Brot und Wein, aber inwendig in der Seele, durch den Glauben, den wahren Leib und Blut Jesu Christi. Eine weitere Erklärung wird unser ehrwürdiger Ältester thun, wenn uns Gott seine Gnade dazu verleihen wird, daß wir das heilige Abendmahl mit Danksgiving unterhalten werden.

10. Artikel.

Vom Fußwaschen

Lehren wir, daß der Herr Jesus Christus, unser Heiland, nachdem er das Abendmahl eingesetzt, sein Kleid abgelegt, nahm er einen Schurz und umgürtete sich, goß Wasser in ein Becken und hub an, den Jüngern die Füße zu waschen. Da er nun ihre Füße gewaschen hatte, nahm er seine Kleider und setzte sich wieder nieder und sprach abermals zu ihnen: Wisset ihr, was ich euch gethan habe? Ihr heißet mich Herr und Meister und saget recht daran, denn ich bin es auch. So nun ich, euer Herr und Meister, euch die Füße gewaschen habe, so sollt ihr euch auch einander die Füße waschen. Ein Beispiel habe ich euch gegeben, daß ihr thut, wie ich euch gethan habe. So ihr solches wisset, selig seid ihr, so ihr solches thut. Ueberhaupt haben wir dabei zu bemerken, daß der Herr Jesus hiermit hat vorstellen wollen, wie er aus lauter Liebe sich erniedrigt und Knechtsgestalt angenommen hat, um uns von Sünden zu erlösen und zu reinigen, und uns also gelehrt, daß wir ihm nachfolgen und in Demut und Liebe uns auch also untereinander dienen sollen.

11. Artikel.

Vom Ehestand

Bekennen wir auch einen Ehestand, von Gott selbst im Paradiese mit Adam und Eva eingesetzt, nämlich von zwei Personen, worüber Gott der Herr den Segen gesprochen, nach 1. Mose 1, 28. Da aber die Menschen dieses mißbrauchten und viele Weiber nahmen, so hat der Herr Jesus im Neuen Bunde solches gänzlich abgelehrt und gesagt, daß Gott im Anfang nur einen Mann und ein Weib erschaffen und sie zusammengefügt, nach Matth. 19. Dieser Ehestand in der christlichen Gemeinde muß bestehen aus zwei gläubigen Personen, die durch eine Taufe zu einem Leibe getauft und von oben aus Gott neugeboren, und diese heiraten dann in dem Herrn, nach 1. Kor. 7, 39. Die können denn auch in ihrem Stande selig werden, wenn sie bleiben im Glauben, in der Liebe und in der Heiligung und in der Zucht. 1. Tim. 2, 15. Moses, der Gesetzlehrer der israelitischen Kirche, hat den halsstarrigen Juden erlaubt, sich zu scheiden von ihren Weibern und ihnen einen Scheidebrief zu geben, laut 5. Mose 25. Diese Ehescheidung hat der Herr Jesus, unser Gesetzgeber, im Neuen Testament ganz aufgehoben und den Ehestand wieder auf die erste Weise, so wie Gott der Herr im Paradiese, von zwei gläubigen Personen eingesetzt und sie zusammengefügt, als ein Fleisch. Was nun Gott zusammengefügt, soll der Mensch nicht scheiden. Also können sie nicht voneinander geschieden werden, so lange sie leben. Aber wenn einer stirbt, so hat der andere frei, sich zu verheiraten, an welchen er will, allein daß es in dem Herrn geschehe, nach 1. Kor. 7, 39. Wir verstehen dieses, daß er stehen muß im rechten Glauben an den Herrn Jesus Christum, und das in und nicht außer der Gemeinde.

denn wir halten es für unerlaubt, wenn jemand außer der Gemeinde heiratet, wie wir ein Exempel an der ersten Welt haben, was Gott daran ein Mißfallen getragen, nach 1. Mose 6. Weil auch selten anders als Zank und Streit unter solchen Eheleuten entstehen, und Sirach sie wie ein ungleiches Paar Ochsen beschreibt, welches Gott nicht angenehm, sondern ein Greuel ist: wollen also einen jeglichen unter uns gewarnt und aufs brüderlichste ermahnt haben, sich doch vor solcher Heirat zu hüten. Der liebe Gott wolle uns doch durch seinen Geist bewahren, damit doch niemand in solche Thorheit gerate, und den Herrn und seine Gemeinde um irgend etwas in der Welt verlasse, denn der Herr Jesus sagt: Wer etwas mehr liebt denn mich, der ist meiner nicht wert, nach Matth. 10.

12. Artikel.

Vom evangelischen Bann, dessen Entziehung und Annahme.

Von dem evangelischen Bann, Entziehung und Wiederannahmung der Gestraften in der Gemeinde, glauben und bekennen wir, daß der Herr Jesus seiner Gemeinde den Himmelreichsschlüssel gegeben hat, zu binden und zu lösen, und auch geboten, alle ärgerlichen und ungehorsamen Glieder von seinem Leibe und Gemeinde zu bannen, wie auch der Apostel Paulus der Gemeinde zu Korinth, 1. Kor. 5, 13, befahl: Thut von euch selbst hinaus, was böse ist. Aber wie vorsichtig man zur Besserung damit umgehen muß, lehrt uns der Herr Jesus in Matth. 18, wenn er spricht: Sündiget dein Bruder an dir, so gehe hin und strafe ihn zwischen dir und ihm allein; hört er dich, so hast du deinen Bruder gewonnen; hört er dich nicht, so nimm noch einen oder zwei zu dir, auf daß alle Sachen bestehen in zweier oder dreier Zeugen Mund; höret er die nicht, so sage es der Gemeinde; höret er die Gemeinde nicht, so halte ihn als einen Heiden und Zöllner. Daß man vorsichtig mit dem Bann und der Absonderung umgehen soll, lehrt unser Voraltester Menno Simons und alle seine Mitarbeiter am Werk und Hause des Herrn, wenn er also spricht, daß sie ihn nach rechter apostolischer Art lehren und ausüben sollen, nicht zu schnell und nicht zu langsam, nicht zu streng und nicht zu gelinde, damit nicht das junge zarte Böcklein gekocht werde, weil's noch an seiner Mutter Milch saugt. 2. Mose 24. Wenn aber jemand in offenbaren Werken sich von seinem Gott geschieden, nach Jes. 5, 9, sich selbst in Gottes Zorn und Ungnade gestürzt, die Gemeinde Gottes ärgert und betrübt, befiehlt der Herr Jesus selbst wegzuworfen, nach Matth. 15, 13. Diese Absonderung haben auch die Apostel des Herrn und die ersten Christen gebraucht und unterhalten, wie zu sehen 1. Kor. 5, 5 und 1. Tim. 1, 20. Die dann auf solche Art ihres unordentlichen Lebens halber von der Gemeinde gethan und zu ihrer Besserung abgesondert werden, von denen muß man sich entziehen und meiden zu ihrer Selbstbeschämung, auf daß ihr Geist selig werde an jenem Tage.

nach 1. Kor. 5. Also ist diese Absonderung von der Gemeinde nicht zum Verderben, sondern daß sie zur Buße und Belehrung gelangen und beschämt und zerknirscht in ihren Herzen werden. Wir müssen sie auch nicht halten als Feinde, sondern als Brüder ermahnen, nach der Lehre des Apostels, 2. Thess. 3, 15. Ja vielmehr für sie beten, daß der Herr Jesus ihnen wolle gnädig sein, ihre Sünden vergebe und aus erbarmender Liebe sie wieder zu Kindern und Miterben mache. Denn der Herr hat uns nicht Macht gegeben zu verderben, sondern zu bessern, nach 2. Kor. 10, 18, und darum sagt auch der Herr Jesus in Matth. 18: Was dünket euch, wenn ein Mensch hundert Schafe hätte und eins unter denselben verirrt, läßt er nicht die neunundneunzig auf dem Berge und gehet hin und suchet das verirrt? Und so er es findet, wahrlich ich sage euch, er freuet sich darüber mehr denn über die neunundneunzig, die nicht verirrt sind. Also ist vor unserm Vater im Himmel nicht der Wille, daß jemand von diesen Kleinen verloren werde. Und darum muß auch die Gemeinde dem Gestraften, nachdem er wahre Buße gethan, die Hand der Liebe wieder reichen und ihn wieder für ein Mitglied der Gemeinde annehmen. Es ist genug, sagt der Apostel, daß er also von vielen gestraft ist, auf daß ihr ihm desto mehr vergebet und tröstet, auf daß er nicht in allzu große Traurigkeit versinke. Darum ermahne ich euch, daß ihr die Liebe an dem beweiset, nach 2. Kor. 2, 8.

13. Artikel.

Von der Obrigkeit

Bekennen wir denn auch, daß Gott der Herr in allen Ländern Obrigkeiten verordnet hat, aber über Israel ist er selbst Herr geworden, nach Sirach 17, 14. 15. Glauben und bekennen, daß keine Obrigkeit ist, ohne die von Gott, daß die Obrigkeit, die da ist, von Gott verordnet, so daß, wer sich der Obrigkeit widersetzt, der widerstrebt Gottes Ordnung, die aber widerstreben, werden über sich ein Urteil empfangen, nach Röm. 13, 1. Darum müssen wir der Obrigkeit unterthan sein, um des Herrn willen, es sei dem Könige als dem Obersten und den Hauptleuten als den Gesandten von ihnen, zur Rache über die Uebelthäter und zu Liebe den Frommen, nach 1. Pet. 2. Und weil die Obrigkeit Gottes Dienerin ist, die das Schwert nicht umsonst trägt, und eine Rächerin zur Strafe über den, der Böses thut, nach Röm. 13, 4, so müssen auch die Gläubigen ihre Strafe fürchten, auf daß niemand unter uns leide als ein Mörder oder Dieb oder der in ein fremd Amt greift. Wir müssen ihnen unterthan sein, nicht nur um der Strafe, sondern um des Gewissens willen; darum müssen wir ihnen auch Schatzung und Zoll geben, weil sie Gottes Diener sind, die solchen Schutz handhaben. Wir müssen jedermann geben, was wir schuldig sind: Schuß, dem der Schuß gebühret; Zoll, dem der Zoll gebühret; Furcht, dem die Furcht, und Ehre, dem die Ehre gebühret. Aber in dem, was Gott zuwider, müssen

wir Gott mehr gehorsam sein denn den Menschen, nach Apstg. 5. Auch müssen wir der Stadt und des Reichs Bestes suchen, worin wir wohnen, und für sie fleißig zu Gott bitten, auf daß es uns mit ihnen wohlgehe im Lande, darinnen wir sind. Jer. 29, 7.

14. Artikel.

Vom Eidschwören

Glauben und bekennen wir, daß ein Christ, der aus Gott, ja aus Wasser und Geist wiedergeboren ist, allezeit in der Wahrheit wandeln muß und deswegen auch alles sein Thun vor Gott und den Menschen muß recht sein, hat deswegen nicht nötig, einen hohen oder niedrigen Eid zu schwören, sondern allezeit, wenn er ja sagt, muß es auch ja sein, und wenn er nein sagt, muß es auch nein sein. Denn wenn sich jemand mit hohen Worten ausdrückt, der giebt deutlich zu erkennen, daß er von der Einfalt abweiche, und macht sich selbst verdächtig, daß man seinem Worte, ja oder nein, nicht glauben kann. Unser Herr Jesus hat auch den Christen im Neuen Testament das Eidschwören gänzlich abgelehrt und verboten, wie zu sehen in Matth. 5, 33—38, daß sie in keinerlei Weise schwören sollen, sondern unsere Worte sollen sein ja, ja, und nein, nein, was darüber ist, das ist vom Uebel, sagt unser Heiland. Denn der Mund, der Lügen redet, tötet seine eigene Seele, nach Sirach 1. Und der Lügner Teil wird sein im Psuhl, der mit Feuer und Schwefel brennt, laut Offb. 21. Und darum muß auch unser Ja allezeit ja, und unser Nein allezeit nein sein, sonst wird Gott, der unsere Herzen richtet, es ebenso hoch strafen, als wenn andere falsch geschworen haben. Schließe also den Artikel und hoffe, daß fromme Kinder Gottes hierin Gott mehr gehorchen denn den Menschen.

15. Artikel.

Von der Rache und Feindschaft, und von der Wehrlosigkeit

Lehren und bekennen wir auch, daß Christen, als der Welt abgestorbene und aus Gott geborene Menschen, in der Welt keine Rache üben, nach der Lehre Jesu, ihres Meisters, wie er hiervon in Matth. 5, 38 selbst spricht. Und Paulus spricht: Rächet euch selber nicht, meine Liebsten, sondern gebet Raum dem Zorn; denn es stehet geschrieben: Die Rache ist mein, ich will vergelten, spricht der Herr. So nun deinen Feind hungert, so speise ihn; dürstet ihn, so tränke ihn. Wenn du das thust, so wirst du feurige Kohlen auf sein Haupt sammeln. Laß dich nicht das Böse überwinden, sondern überwinde das Böse mit Gutem, laut Röm. 12, 19—21. Darum müssen auch gläubige Kinder Gottes, die da wollen theilhaben an ihrem Herrn und Meister, ihm auch in aller Gelassenheit und Sanftmut suchen nachzufolgen und gleich zu werden, mitleidig, brüderlich, freundlich, nicht Böses mit Bösem vergelten, sondern dagegen segnen und wissen, daß wir dazu berufen sind, daß

wir den Segen ererben sollen nach 1. Pet. 3, 19. Aus diesem allen sehen wir, daß uns nach der reinen Lehre des Herrn Jesu im Neuen Testament alle Rache verboten ist, und wir daher auch nach dem Geiste des Evangeliums, der ein Geist des Friedens ist, kein Schwert, Waffe und Gewehr gegen unsere Feinde gebrauchen dürfen. Ob wir wohl im Fleische wandeln, so streiten wir doch nicht fleischlicher Weise, denn die Waffen unserer Ritterschaft sind nicht fleischlich, sondern mächtig vor Gott. 2. Kor. 10, 3. Weil wir aber das Schwert des Krieges meiden müssen, auch, wenn es die Not erfordert, um des Herrn willen fliehen von einer Stadt oder Land in das andere, und den Raub der Güter dulden, aber niemand Leides thun, so sollen wir auch von Herzen, im Wort und Wandel, dem Lamme auf der Bahn des Friedens, dem Wege des Leidens und Duldens, nachfolgen, damit unser Glaube nicht als Heuchelei vor Gott erfunden werde. Schließe also den Artikel von der Rache und aller Feindschaft, die einem Christen nicht erlaubt ist.

16. Artikel.

Vom freien Willen des Menschen

Glauben und bekennen wir, daß der Mensch einen freien Willen hat, sich zu erwählen, welches er will, das Gute oder das Böse, den Tod oder das Leben, und daß Gott, der Herr, ihm Leben und Tod, Feuer und Wasser vorgestellt hat; er hat frei zu wählen, welches er will, nach 5. Mose 30, 15. Ja, Sirach sagt: Willst du, so halte die Gebote und thue, was ihm wohlgefällt. Der Mensch hat vor sich Leben und Tod, welches er will, das wird ihm gegeben werden, nach Sirach 15, 17. Dieses sehen wir auch an unsern Voreltern im Paradiese, welche Gott, der Herr, erschaffen hatte, daß sie ihren Schöpfer könnten lieb haben, fürchten und seine Gebote halten, oder daß sie ihren Gott freiwillig verlassen könnten und seine Gebote übertreten, welches sie auch leider gethan, laut 1. Mose 3. Durch diesen freien Willen, daß der Mensch hat können wollen Gott fürchten, wird auch Gott die Welt richten; auch sein gerechtes Urteil über ihn fällen am jüngsten Tage. Aber diesen freien Willen zum Guten haben wir nicht von uns selber, sondern durch die Gnade Gottes, daß wir können das Gute wählen, dem Evangelium glauben und uns bekehren von der Finsternis zu seinem wunderbaren Licht und zu verleugnen das ungöttliche Leben und dagegen züchtig, gerecht und gottselig leben in dieser Welt, nach Tit. 2, 12. Denn wir haben nichts aus uns selber, sondern durch die Gnade Gottes, denn außer der Gnade Gottes sind wir nicht fähig, etwas Gutes auszurichten, darum müssen wir Gott allein die Ehre geben und ihm für seine unaussprechliche Gnade danken, für das Gute, das er in uns wirkt. Schließe also den Artikel vom freien Willen des Menschen.

17. Artikel.

Von der Auferstehung der Toten.

Glauben und bekennen denn auch eine Auferstehung der Toten, denn den Menschen ist gesetzt, einmal zu sterben, darnach aber das Gericht, nach Ebr. 9, 27. Denn dieses sündliche Fleisch und Blut kann das Reich Gottes nicht ererben, nach 1. Kor. 15. Denn es muß erst als ein Weizenkörnlein in die Erde gesät werden, nach Anleitung der Schrift. Von dieser Auferstehung der Toten, beide der Frommen und Gottlosen, der Gerechten und Ungerechten, sagt der Herr Jesus in Joh. 5, 28. 29: Es kommt die Stunde, in welcher alle, die in den Gräbern sind, werden die Stimme des Sohnes Gottes hören, und werden hervorgehen, die da Gutes gethan haben zur Auferstehung des Lebens, die aber Böses gethan haben, zur Auferstehung des Gerichts. Viele, so unter der Erde schlafen liegen, werden aufwachen: etliche zum ewigen Leben, etliche zur ewigen Schmach und Schande. Daniel 12. Der Apostel Paulus sagt in 1. Thess. 4, 16, daß, wenn der Herr Jesus mit einem Feldgeschrei und mit der Stimme des Erzengels und mit der Posaune Gottes zum Gericht sich offenbaren wird, dann die Toten in Christo zuerst auferstehen werden, darnach wir, die wir leben und überbleiben, werden zusammen hingerückt werden in den Wolken des Himmels, dem Herrn entgegen in der Luft und werden bei ihm sein allezeit. Auf diese Auferstehung hat sich der fromme Hiob in seinem Leiden getröstet, wenn er Kap. 19, 25 also spricht: Ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt, und er wird mich hernach aus der Erde auferwecken. Wir wissen, spricht Paulus, daß der, der den Herrn Jesum auferweckt hat, uns auch auferwecken wird durch Christum (2. Kor. 4, 14), und in 1. Thess. 4 spricht er: Wir wollen euch, lieben Brüder, nicht verhalten von denen, die da schlafen, auf daß ihr nicht traurig seid, wie die andern, die keine Hoffnung haben, denn so wir glauben, daß Jesus gestorben und auferstanden ist, also wird Gott auch, die da entschlafen sind, durch Jesum mit ihm führen. Und sage zum Schluß mit dem Apostel Paulus: So tröstet euch untereinander mit diesen Worten.

18. Artikel.

Vom jüngsten Gericht zum Belohnen der Frommen und Bestrafen der Bösen

Glauben und bekennen wir ein jüngstes Gericht, eine Belohnung der Frommen und eine Bestrafung der Gottlosen, von diesem Tage des Gerichts. Zeit und Stunde weiß kein Engel, viel weniger ein sterblicher Mensch, denn der Vater hat es seiner Macht allein vorbehalten. Gleich aber, wie es zur Zeit Noahs war, sie aßen, sie tranken, sie freieten und ließen sich freien bis auf den Tag, da Noah in die Arche ging, also wird auch sein die Zukunft des Menschen Sohnes, nach Matth. 24, 27. Denn der Herr wird unversehens kommen, als ein Dieb in

der Nacht, und wie ein Fallstrich wird er kommen über alle, die auf Erden wohnen, laut Luk. 21, 35. Wie der Blitz aufgehet und scheinet bis zum Niedergang, also wird auch sein die Zukunft des Menschen Sohnes, nach Matth. 24, und auf diesen Tag wird das Gericht gehalten werden über alle Menschen. Davon hat Enoch, der Siebente von Adam, geweissaget und gesprochen: Siehe, der Herr kommt mit viel tausend Heiligen, Gesicht zu halten über alle und zu strafen alle ihre Gottlosen, um alle Werke ihres gottlosen Wandels, damit sie gottlos gewesen sind, und um alle das Harte, das die gottlosen Sünder über ihn geredet haben, nach Judä Brief, B. 14. 15. Dem Propheten Daniel ist dieses Gericht im Gesicht gezeigt worden, wie er selber bezeugt im 7. Kapitel, wenn er spricht: Ich sahe, daß Stühle gesetzt wurden und der Alte setzte sich darauf, dessen Kleid war schneeweiß und das Haar auf seinem Haupte war wie reine Wolle, sein Stuhl war eitel Feuerflammen und desselbigen Räder brannten mit Feuer, und von demselbigen ging aus ein langer, feuriger Strahl; tausendmal Tausend dienten ihm und zehntausendmal Zehntausend standen vor ihm. Das Gericht ward gehalten und die Bücher wurden aufgethan. Davon sagt auch Johannes in seiner Offenbarung, Kapitel 20, 11: Und ich sahe einen großen, weißen Stuhl und den, der darauf saß, vor welches Angesicht flohe die Erde und der Himmel, und ihnen ward keine Stätte erfunden, und ich sahe die Toten, beide groß und klein, stehen vor Gott, und die Bücher wurden aufgethan, und ein anderes Buch ward aufgethan, welches ist des Lebens, und die Toten wurden gerichtet nach der Schrift in den Büchern, nach ihren Werken. Da wird er unsere Werke vor Gericht bringen, sie seien gut oder böse, nach Pred. Sal. 12. Da wird der Gottlose mit seiner Unart nicht entfliehen und der Frommen Hoffnung wird nicht ausbleiben. Einem jeglichen wird widerfahren, wie er es verdienet hat, nach Sir. 16. Da wird dann ans Licht kommen, was im Finstern verborgen gehalten, auch der Rat des Herzens soll da offenbar werden, nach 1. Kor. 4, 5. Da dann die Menschen Rechenschaft geben müssen von einem jeden unnützen Wort, das sie geredet haben, nach Matth. 12, 36. Ein jeder wird für sich selbst müssen Gott Rechenschaft geben, nach Röm. 14. Denn dieses Gericht wird gehen über alle Menschen, die von Anfang gelebet haben. Denn hier wird auch keine Entschuldigung vor dem allsehenden Gott helfen, denn daß man weiß, daß ein Gott sei, ist allen Menschen offenbar. Da werden die Sünder sehen und empfinden, aber zu spät, daß sie dem Lichte Jesu nicht gefolget haben. Da wird dann der Herr Jesus offenbaret werden vom Himmel mit den Engeln seiner Kraft und wird sitzen auf dem Stuhl seiner Herrlichkeit und alle Völker versammeln vor ihm. Da wird er sie voneinander scheiden, wie ein Hirte die Schafe voneinander scheidet, und wird die Schafe zu seiner Rechten und die Böcke zu seiner Linken stellen. Da wird dann der König sagen zu denen zu seiner Rechten: Kommet her, ihr Geseg-

neten meines Vaters, ererbet das Reich, das euch bereitet ist von Anbeginn der Welt, denn ich bin hungrig gewesen und ihr habt mich gespeiset, ich bin durstig gewesen und ihr habt mich getränkt, ich bin ein Gast gewesen und ihr habt mich beherberget, ich bin naßend gewesen und ihr habt mich bekleidet, ich bin krank gewesen und ihr habt mich besucht, ich bin gefangen gewesen und ihr seid zu mir gekommen. Dann werden die Gerechten antworten und sagen: Herr, wann haben wir dich gesehen hungrig, oder durstig, oder naßend, oder krank, oder gefangen, und haben dir gedienet? Dann wird der König antworten und sagen: Was ihr gethan habt einem unter diesen meinen geringsten Brüdern, das habt ihr mir gethan. Dann wird er auch sagen zu denen zu seiner Linken: Gehet hin von mir, ihr Verfluchten, in das ewige Feuer, das bereitet ist dem Teufel und seinen Engeln. Denn ich bin hungrig gewesen und ihr habt mich nicht gespeiset, ich bin durstig gewesen und ihr habt mich nicht getränkt, ich bin ein Gast gewesen und ihr habt mich nicht beherberget, ich bin naßend gewesen und ihr habt mich nicht bekleidet, ich bin krank und gefangen gewesen und ihr habt mich nicht besucht. Dann werden sie antworten und sagen: Herr, wann haben wir dich gesehen hungrig oder durstig, oder einen Gast, oder naßend und gefangen und haben dir nicht gedienet? Dann wird er ihnen antworten und sagen: Was ihr nicht gethan habt einem unter diesen geringsten Brüdern, das habt ihr mir auch nicht gethan. Und sie werden in die ewige Pein gehen. Aber die Gerechten in das ewige Leben, laut Matth. 25, wozu uns allen aus Gnaden der dreimal heilige Gott, Vater, Sohn und Heiliger Geist, verhelfen wolle. Amen.



Schlusstext: Offb. Joh. 14, 13. Und ich hörte eine Stimme vom Himmel sagen: Schreibe, selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herrn sterben von nun an. Ja, der Geist spricht, daß sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit, denn ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.

Articles Of Faith

of the

KRIMMER MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH
OF NORTH AMERICA

1929/1940

FOREWORD

Oftentimes have the churches of our Conference felt the need of written Articles of Faith that agree with the Bible and be of common usage to our churches. Repeatedly have our brethren and especially ministers been asked for written copies. It is therefore necessary for preachers and deacons and for all church members, to have a clear understanding of our Christian principles based upon the Holy Scriptures, for we believe it our duty, always to be ready to give answer to every man that asketh a reason for the hope that is in us. I Peter 3:15, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, being ready to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you."

ARTICLE 1. THE BIBLE

We believe the Holy Bible to be inspired of God and that it is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for Correction, for instruction in righteousness (II Tim. 3:16). It is written by holy men of God, being moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21). It is a testimony written by eyewitnesses (Acts 1:21), and proves unto us all things whereof God hath spoken by the mouth of His Holy Prophets, that have been from old (Acts 3:21). It is a perfect doctrine of faith to which we have no right to add or take away (Gal. 1:8,9; Rev. 22:18,19). It is also a strong consolation and encouragement for believers and an anchor of our souls both sure and steadfast. (Heb. 6:18-20). Again it is a two edged sword, the sword of the Spirit, piercing even unto the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

II Tim. 3:16, "Every scripture inspired by God is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness." II Peter 1:21, "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Eph. 6:17, "And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Heb. 4:12, "For the Word of God is living and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even unto the dividing of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

ARTICLE 2. TRIUNE GOD

We believe in one God (Deut. 6:4 and 4:35). He is the creator of heaven and earth and all the host of them (Gen. 1:1, Psa. 33:6). "Thousand times thousand of holy angels are ministering unto him and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him" (Dan. 7:10). He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords (I Tim 6:15). He alone hath Immortality and dwelleth in a light

to which no man can approach (I Tim. 6:16). He is almighty, for he spake and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast (Psa. 33:9). He is omnipresent (everywhere present), and omniscient (all-knowing) (Psa. 139:1-16), righteous and holy (Psa. 145:17). He is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy (Psa. 145:8).

Deut. 6:4, "Hear oh Israel! The Lord, our God, is one Lord." Deut 4:35, "Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know, that the Lord he is God and there is none else beside him." Gen. 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Psa. 33:6, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Dan. 7:10, "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him, thousand thousands ministered unto Him and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him; the judgement was set and the books were opened." I Tim. 6:15,16, "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in a light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen." Psa. 33:9, "For He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast." Psa. 139:1, "Oh Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me." Verse 2, "Thou knowest my down-sitting and my uprising. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off." Verse 3, "Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways." Verse 4, "For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether." Verse 5, "Thou hast beset me behind and before and has laid thine hand upon me," etc. Psa. 145:17, "The Lord is righteous and all His ways and holy in all His works." Verse 8, "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy."

This one God reveals himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16,17; Chap. 28:19; John 16:11-15; II Cor. 13:14).

Matt. 3:16,17, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descend as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." John 16:12-15, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you can not bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth; for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak; and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he taketh of mine and shall declare it unto you." II Cor. 13:4, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, Amen."

(a) God, the Father

We believe in God the Father, that he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:17,18),

from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named (Eph. 3:15), and that he is the Father of all believers as he teaches us to pray in the Lord's prayer (Matt. 6:9).

John 5:17,18, "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh even until now, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also, that God was his Father making himself equal with God." Eph. 3:15, "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Matt. 6:9, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name."

(b) God, the Son

Of Jesus Christ we believe and confess, that he is the only begotten of the Father, (John 1:14; Micah 5:2; John 1:1,2). He is the Lord our Saviour (Luke 2:11), who saves his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21), He purchased them with his own blood (Acts 20:28). This is the true God and eternal life (I John 5:20). Through love he was sent by the Father into this world to save it from the curse of sin by his own death (John 3:16). He became flesh (John 1:14), was born of the virgin Mary (Luke 2), as the angel had told her, (Luke 1:31-35), "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that Holy Thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." He took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men (Phil 2:7). In the garden of Gethsemane were all our sins laid upon him that He fell on his face and prayed; Oh my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt (Matt. 26:39). But he became obedient unto death, the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8). "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name." That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). Isaiah says; The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed (Isa. 53:5). Through his death, resurrection and ascension he has obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb. 9:12).

John 1:14, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth." John 6:69, "And we have believed and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Micah 5:2, "And thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be the ruler of Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." John 1:1,2, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." Matt. 1:21, "And she shall bring forth a

son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for it is he, that shall save his people from their sins." Heb. 9:12, "Nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, he entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

(c) God, the Holy Spirit

We believe and confess that the Holy Spirit proceedeth from the Father and is sent by the Son (John 15:26). As a divine being he is one with the Father and with the Son, for Jesus says, Baptize in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:10). Paul teaches us: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God in whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). This Holy Spirit came from heaven in the form of a dove and lighted upon Jesus after his baptism (Matt. 3:16). He was poured forth upon the apostles on the day of pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2). Also the Gentiles, to whom Peter was sent to preach them the Gospel of Christ, were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10). He is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive. He is the Comforter of those that are troubled, and a teacher of all believers (John 14:16,17,26). He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:8-11). By the Holy Spirit believers are sealed and he is an earnest of their inheritance of God's own possession (Eph. 1:13,14).

John 15:26, "But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me." John 14:16, 17, "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive for it beholdeth him not neither knoweth him; ye know him, for he abideth with you and shall be in you." Eph. 1:13,14, "In whom, having also believed, ye are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of your inheritance unto the redemption of God's own possession unto the praise of his glory."

ARTICLE 3. THE CREATION and FALL of MAN

Let us make man in our image after our likeness. So said the Creator and thereby described the conditions and nature of man. (Gen. 1:26,27; Chap. 2:21,22). Created in God's likeness, pure and holy, living in the garden of Eden in daily communion with God, the first men were in a glorious state as long as they did not transgress God's law. However through the deceit of Satan they ate of the forbidden fruit, thus falling into sin and death together with their whole generation, according to God's warning (Gen. 3:6,7; Rom. 5:12). They were driven from the garden and condemned to a life of sorrow and pain (Gen 3:8-24). Man is conceived and born in sin, unfit to do good and is a child of wrath through transgression and sin (Eph. 2:3; Psa. 51:7). "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Further we believe and confess that men are saved by grace alone and not by works (Eph. 2:1-9).

Genesis 1:26,27, "And God said, Let us make men in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Rom. 5:18. Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all man to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Eph. 2:3,9, "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, that no man should glory." Tit. 2:11, "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men."

Repentance, Faith, Sonship, Justification and Sanctification

"Repent ye and believe the gospel!" This was the Saviour's first sermon (Mark 1:15). True repentance is induced by God through the Holy Spirit and consists in heart regret and humbleness (Joel 2:12,13; Job 42:5,6; Luke 10:13) knowledge and confession of sin (Luke 19:8). We must come to God by faith, receive Jesus (John 1:12). By this we receive the sonship of God, are born again, or as Paul expresses himself, become a new creature (II Cor. 5:17). We receive justification and peace with God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1,2; II Cor. 5:21). By sanctification we understand the becoming free from the dominion of sin (Rom. 6:12,13), and to preserve in well doing (Rom. 6:22; Heb. 12:14).

Joel 2:12,13, "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart with fasting and with weeping and with mourning. Rent your heart and not your garments and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness and repenteth him of evil." Luke 19:8, "And Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." John 1:12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Heb. 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." II Cor. 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things have become new." Rom. 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." II Cor. 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Rom. 6:12,13,22, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Verse 22,

"But, now, being made free from sin and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Heb. 12:14, "Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

ARTICLE 4. THE HOLY BAPTISM

Christ teaches us: He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved! Consequently the believing on the Lord Jesus as Redeemer is the condition to baptism. Baptism is the seal of faith (Matt. 28:19). Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but the covenant of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Peter 3:21). It personifies the dying and the resurrection of the believers with Christ (Rom. 6:4-11). Therefore we hold immersion as the scriptural baptism, because the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane took the cup of his suffering from his Father's hand in a kneeling condition, and at Golgatha, when he had emptied the same, he bowed his head and died; so we baptize the candidate in a kneeling posture forward into the water, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Matt. 28:19, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." I Peter 3:21, "In like figure, whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Rom. 6:4, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Col. 2:12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through faith, which God worketh, who hath raised him from the dead."

ARTICLE 5. THE CHURCH of GOD on EARTH

We believe in a general Christian church, or the Church of all believers which Jesus established himself (Matt. 16:18) which he has purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28) wherein he walketh and knoweth their works (Rev. 2:1,2) and has cleansed it with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:26,27). Its members are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are buildt upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:19,20). The leadership he has entrusted to elders, preachers and deacons, who shall take care and feed the same (Acts 20:23) not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock (I Peter 5:2,3). The members shall also love one another, observe and care for each other as Jesus teaches us (Matt. 18:15-18). Love and a forgiving attitude are essential conditions in a church (Matt. 18:25-35; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13; Matt 5:23,24). It is also their duty to restore those that go astray,

and to forgive heartily, when a member acknowledges and regrets his mistakes (Gal. 6:1; James 5:19,20). The church shall withdraw from such members that walk disorderly, and put away those that are wicked (II Thess. 3:6; I Cor 5:13; Matt. 18:17).

Matt. 16:18, "And I say also unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Acts 20:8, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood." Rev. 2:1,2, "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith he, that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear those which are evil; and thou hast tried those which say, they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars." Eph. 5:25-27, "Even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 2:19,20, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and the household of God. And are built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." I Peter 5:2-4, "Feel the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away." Matt. 18:15-17, "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." John 13:34,35, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. By this shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." Gal. 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." James 5:19,20, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him, let him know that he, which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins." II Thess. 3:6, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which they received from us." I Cor. 5:13, "But them, that are without God

judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves."

ARTICLE 6. THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord Jesus during the night in which he was betrayed, established the Lord's Supper with bread and wine, as the gospels give record (Matt. 26; Mark 14; Luke 22). He commanded the disciples to take the same in remembrance of him. This simple supper proclaims to us the great fact, that Christ gave his life unto death for our redemption and that he imparts himself for all that believe in him. As often as it is held the death of the Lord is proclaimed (I Cor. 11:25,26). Every partaker of the Lord's Supper has to judge himself, according to the Word of God, over his heart condition. Whosoever shall eat and drink it unworthy, catcheth and drinketh damnation unto himself, not discerning the Lord's body (I Cor. 11:27).

I Cor. 11:23-27, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner he also took the cup, saying: This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat of this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthy, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

ARTICLE 7. FEET WASHING

We read in John 13:1-17 that the Lord Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, and thus ordained the feet washing in connection with the Lord's Supper, as a sign of love and communion (John 13:12-17).

"So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; either he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

ARTICLE 8. MATRIMONY

Marriage was instituted of God himself, (Gen. 1:27 and 2:18) in the garden of Eden, with our first parents, Adam and Eve, one man and one wife for another's help and happiness, to avoid impurity and disorder and propagate the human family (Gen. 1:28). In the New Testament Jesus Christ confirmed this institution, and therefore believers may enter matrimony under one condition, to marry only in the Lord (I Cor. 7:39). We do also believe that God's Word forbids, that believers

should marry unbelievers (Gen. 6:2-4; Deut. 7:1-4; Amos 3:3). Paul teaches the Corinthians, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. What concord hath Christ with Belial or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?" (II Cor. 6:14). Christ forbade the practice of divorce that was permitted in the Old Testament, with the following words: Moses for your hardness of heart, suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it hath not been so (Matt. 19:3-9). What God hath joined together, no man has a right to put asunder. With husband and wife true to their conjugal vow, and the children brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, we have an ideal home.

Gen. 2:18, "And the Lord God said, It is not good for man to be alone; I will make an helpmeet for him." Verse 24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh." Matt. 19:6, "Wherefore they are no more two but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together accept they be agreed?" Mark 10:11,12, "Whosoever, shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her; and if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery." Eph. 6:1-4, "Children obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

ARTICLE 9. THE GOVERNMENT

God's Word teaches us, that every soul should be in subjection to the higher powers, because they are ordained from God (Rom. 13:1-7). They are called to avenge evil and bear the sword not in vain. It is their duty to commend that which is good, therefore we must pay tribute and support them. They are ministers of God, attending continually upon that very thing, Christ teaches us, to render to Caesar the things that are Caesars (Matt. 22:21), and Paul exhorts us, to intercede and pray for our governments that we may, under their authority, lead a quiet and peaceful life, in all godliness and honesty (I Tim. 2:1-3). Only in case they call upon us to do things contrary to the higher law of God, we should say with Peter, we must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

Rom. 13:1-7, "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he, that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God, and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is a minister of God, an avenger for

wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing." Matt. 22:21, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesars, and unto God the things that are God's." I Tim. 2:1-3, "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgiving be made for all men; For kings and all that are in authority; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." Acts 5:29, "But Peter and the apostles answered and said, we must obey God rather than men."

ARTICLE 10. SWEARING OF OATHS

We find in the Old Testament that the fathers were allowed to swear an holy oath by the name of God; but our Lord Jesus Christ, the author of the new covenant, has forbidden all swearing of oaths to his followers in the following way:

Matt. 5:33-37, "Again ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you, swear not at all, neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool, of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one." James 5:12, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath, but let your yea be yea, and your nay be nay; that ye fall not under judgment."

ARTICLE 11. NONRESISTANCE AND LOVE TOWARDS ENEMIES

In relation to nonresistance Christ has given us the following instructions: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also" (Matt. 5:38-40). Further Jesus says, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:44,45). How would it harmonize for the followers of the Prince of Peace to smite with the sword? Jesus said to Peter, "Put up again thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword" (Matt. 26:52). The Apostle Paul also teaches us, Rom. 12:19,20, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto the wrath of God, for it is written: Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Again he says, II Cor. 10:4, "For the weapons

of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty before God; to the pulling down of strongholds." Rom 12:21, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Matt. 5:46-48, "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect."

ARTICLE 12. THE DAY OF REST

We read in the Holy Scriptures, that God rested on the seventh day from all his works (Gen. 2:2,3). God later commanded his people Israel, in the fourth commandment, to rest on the seventh day (Ex. 20:10,11). The New Testament day of rest is the first day of the week, on which the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:1) and the gift of the Holy Spirit took place (Acts 2). This day the apostles, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, have celebrated as the day of rest, on which they gathered and preached the Gospel under the blessing of the Lord. This day is a gift of grace of our Lord for our spiritual and physical welfare.

Gen. 2:2,3, "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his works which God created and made. Ex. 20:8-10, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord, thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." Lev. 23:15,16, "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the meat offering, even sabbaths shall be complete, even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord." Matt. 28:1, "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." Acts 2:1-4, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance." Acts 20:7, "And upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight." Psalms 118:24, "This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it."

ARTICLE 13. THE SECOND COMING of CHRIST and the RESURRECTION of the DEAD

When the disciples of our Lord Jesus looked steadfastly toward heaven and saw him ascending

into heaven, there were two men standing beside them in white apparel, which said that Jesus would come again in like manner as they had seen him go into heaven. Jesus himself speaks very plainly of his second coming in Matthew 24 and 25. St. John relates many instances, where Jesus spoke of his second coming in the last discourse with the disciples, in chapters 13 to 17 inclusive, and also describes the second coming of Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation, which he received in the isle of Patmos where he was banished for the Word of God. Also Paul and the other writers of the New Testament speak very plainly of this event of which we cite the following:

Matt. 24:27, "For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man." John 5:28,29, "The hour is coming in which all, that are in the graves, shall hear my voice. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Matt. 25:31-34, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from his goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand: Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:41, "Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Verse 46, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." I Thess. 4:16-18, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." Matt. 25:13, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Rev. 21:7, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son." Rev. 22:12, "And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 1:7, "Behold, he cometh in the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him." Rev. 22:20, "He which testifieth these things saith: Surely, I come quickly. Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" Rev. 1:3, "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this Prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein, for the time is at hand." I Cor. 15:42-43; 55 and 57. Rev. 22:21, "The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all, Amen!"

THIS WE BELIEVE

Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Conference
1923/1950

ARTICLES OF FAITH

I. HOLY SCRIPTURE

We believe that all Scripture, the Old and New Testament, is the only inerrant inspired Word of God, written by holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Peter 1:21). It reveals the will of God to man. (I Cor. 2:9-12). It is the truth (John 17:17; I Thess. 2:13; II Tim. 2:15). The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (Rom. 1:16; II Tim. 3:15), and all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (II Tim. 3:16-17). It is the guide to eternal bliss (Titus 3:4-7; Gal. 4:7).

II. GOD

We believe in only one living and true God as the infinite, perfect, and eternal Spirit, in whom all things have their source, support, and end (Isa. 45:21; Eph. 4:6; Gen. 1:1; Acts 17:28; Heb. 11:3; Lk. 24:39; Col. 1:15; Ps. 90:2; I Tim. 6:16).

We believe in God as omniscient (Heb. 4:13; Acts 15:18); omnipresent (Ps. 139:7; Jer. 23:24; Amos 9:2-3); omnipotent (Jer. 10:12-13; Gen. 35:11; Gen. 1:1, 26); Creator (Gen. 1:1, 26; Jn. 1:1-3; Sustainer (Col. 1:15-17; Ps. 104:27-30; Ps. 75:6-7; Heb. 1:3; Matt. 10:29-30; Gen. 39:21; Gen. 50:20; Dan. 1:9); immutable in His being, holiness, justice, love, and truth (Mal. 3:6; Isa. 6:3; I Jn. 4:8; James 1:17); eternal (Ps. 90:2; Ps. 102:24-27; Heb. 1:12).

Though God is a Spirit (Jn. 4:24), yet Scripture very definitely teaches God as a personality (Ex. 3:14; Gen. 22:13-14; Ps. 23:1; Jn. 17; Acts 14:15; Job 1:12; Gen. 3:8-9, 11, 13, 14; I Thess. 1:9; Ps. 94:9-10; Gen. 6:6; Jn. 3:16; Rev. 3:19f; Gen. 1:1, 26).

III. JESUS CHRIST

We believe in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God. The Son is from eternity the only begotten of the Father. Being conceived of the Holy Spirit He was born man of the virgin Mary (Jn. 3:16; Heb. 1:5-10; Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18-25), in order to fulfill the purpose of God from the foundation of the world to redeem us from eternal curse and bring about our eternal salvation by making full atonement for our sins through His vicarious suffering and death on the cross of Calvary (Jn. 1:14, 29; Mark 10:45; Heb. 10:10-14; I Peter 1:18-29; Isa. 53:4-6). He took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh (Heb. 2:14), thus being true God and also perfect man (I Jn. 3:5; I Tim. 2:5), being made in all things like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15).

He rose triumphantly from the grave the third day and ascended into heaven, and is now at the right hand of God interceding in our behalf; from whence He shall come again in visible form to judge the living and the dead and to establish His rule as Lord of lords and King of kings (John chapters 20 and 21; Acts 1:9-11; II Tim. 4:1; I Tim. 6:15; John 5:22-29; Matthew 25:31 ff).

IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Godhead, and proceedeth from the Father through the Son, (John 15:26). He took part in the creation of the universe (Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4; Psa. 33:6). He directed God's servants in revealing the will of God to mankind (I Peter 1:10-11). He is the author of the Scriptures, (II Peter 1:20-21; Rev. Ch. 2 and 3). At Pentecost He was poured out upon all man (Acts 2:17-18). In this age of grace He reproves the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8-11). He restrains the progress of evil until God's purposes are accomplished (II Thess. 2:7). He regenerates the penitent soul (John 3:3, 5), lives in the body of the believer, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 3:16; I Cor. 6:19), gives the believer the assurance of salvation (Rom. 8:16), comforts, (John 14:16-17), teaches, and brings to his remembrance the proper Scripture verses in witnessing (John 14:26); and guides the believer into all truth (John 16:13). He will sanctify the believer (II Thess. 2:13), and empower him for life and service (Eph. 3:16; I Cor. 2:1-4), and will quicken his mortal body (Rom. 8:11).

V. TRINITY

We believe, though inscrutable yet not self-contradictory, in the unity of the Godhead, commonly known as the Trinity. This Trinity is made up of three distinct persons; namely, God the Father (Rom. 1:7); God the Son (Heb. 1:18); God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4). These three, though one in essence, i.e. equal in their divine perfection, yet individual in personality, perform different but harmonious offices in the great plan of redemption (Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14; Eph. 2:18; Jn. 15:26; Jn. 10:30; Jn. 16:14).

God, who is one with respect to His essence, is three with respect to the modes or distinctions of His being.

"The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead invisible (Jn. 1:18); the Son is all the fulness of the Godhead manifested (Jn. 1:14-18); the Spirit is all the fulness of the Godhead acting immediately upon the creature" (I Cor. 2:9-10). Broadman.

VI. SATAN

We believe that Satan is a real supernatural personality, a fallen angel of great power, cunning, and wickedness, the enemy of God and of all good, seeking the destruction of Christ and the eternal ruin of every soul (Mark 1:13; John 13:2; Matt. 13:19, 39); but is limited in the scope of his power by God (Job 1:12; Job 2:1-6; Luke 22:31 f; I Cor. 10:13).

Satan introduced sin into this world, when he by his subtlety brought about the transgression and fall of our first parents (Gen. 3:1-15). Since then he and the host of fallen angels and evil spirits under his control dominate the present world system deceiving mankind, obstructing the course of the Gospel, blinding the minds of the unbelieving (Eph. 6:11-12; Eph. 2:2; II Cor. 4:4; I John 5:19 R. V.).

Scripture describes his work and character by names such as: "a murderer from the beginning", "a liar and the father of lies", "the accuser of our brethren", "the devil", "the adversary", "the evil one", "the prince of the power of the air", "the god of this world".

His present abode is "in the air", "in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12 R. V.); yet the earth is the special field of his awful activity, where he works disguised as an angel of light or roams about as a roaring lion (II Cor. 11:14 f; I Peter 5:8).

Christ by His death on the cross defeated and judged Satan and stripped him of his power over death (Col. 2:15; John 12:31; John 16:11; Heb. 2:14; I Cor. 15:54-56) and secured victory for the believer over all the wiles of the devil (I John 4:4; Eph. 6:11-13; I John 5:4-5; I Cor. 15:57; James 4:7).

He is doomed first to be cast from his present abode, then at Christ's second coming to be bound a thousand years, and finally to be cast into the lake of fire where he and his angels shall be tormented forever and ever (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

VII. ANGELS

We believe in the existence of a higher order of created, yet spiritual beings between God and man frequently known as ministering spirits, or messengers of God, but more frequently known as angels. These are superior to man but inferior to God (Matt. 18:10; Mk. 13:32; Matt. 13:41; I Pet. 3:22; Heb. 12:22; Col. 1:16; Ps. 104:4; Jn. 5:4; I Cor. 4:9).

Though "spirits", yet they have appeared in visible form as ministers through whom God's power was manifested (Judges 6:11-22; Lk. 1:26; Jn. 20:12; Isa. 37:36; Rev. 20:2-10; Gen. 19:1-26; Heb. 1:14).

Angels announced the birth of Jesus (Lk. 1:28-35); an angel appeared to the shepherds (Lk. 2:9-13); legions of angels were ready to help Jesus (Matt. 26:53); angels ministered to Jesus after His temptation (Matt. 4:11); an angel strengthened Him after the agony in Gethsemane (Lk. 22:43); angels were associated with His resurrection (Math. 28:2-7); attended His ascension (Acts 1:10-11); and will also be associated with His return (I Thess. 4:16; II Thess. 1:7).

Angels assist God in executing judgments upon the earth (Isa. 37:36; Rev. 9:1-5; II Sam. 24:16-17; Gen. 19:13-15; Rev. 19:17).

They are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14); they guard, defend, and deliver God's people (Acts 5:19; II Kings 6:17; Acts 12:7-11; Ps. 34:7); cheer and strengthen them (Acts 5:19, 20); guide the worker to the sinner (Acts 10:3); guard the children, beholding the face of the Father for them (Mt. 18:10); they are eyewitnesses of the church and the believer (I Tim. 5:21; I Cor. 4:9); and receive the departing saints (Lu. 16:22).

VIII. ANTHROPOLOGY — MAN

A. His Creation

We believe that by an immediate act of God, man was created in His image (Gen. 1:26-27); possessing righteousness, holiness, and wisdom (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10, for the purpose that man should be the object of His love, to praise and glorify Him (Eph. 1:4-6), to replenish the earth with God-fearing people, and to subdue and have dominion over the earth and all animate creatures upon it (Gen. 1:26-28; Gen. 9:1, 2).

B. His Fall

We believe that man was subjected to trial in the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15-17), and voluntarily and consciously transgressed God's command (Gen. 3:1-3, 6), and so fell from his holy estate (Gen. 3:16-19; Gen. 2:16, 17). Thus man became alienated from God (Gen. 3:7-13; Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21), and became physically, morally, and spiritually depraved (Rom. 1:19-32). As a result of the fall sin was imputed upon the entire human race (Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 2:14). Man's heart, being desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9-10), leads to acts of sin in his life and finally to just condemnation (Rom. 5:18).

C. His Redemption

We believe that God as the Sovereign Ruler must punish sin (Rom. 6:23). Christ, the Son of God, voluntarily (John 10:17-18) offered Himself on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for sin, the just suffering for the unjust, bearing sin's curse, and tasting death for every man (John 1:29; Heb. 9:11-12; I Tim. 2:5-6; II Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13). Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own stubborn will, his voluntary rejection of Jesus Christ as substitute for penalty (John 3:14-16; John 3:36; Acts 16:31).

D. His Resurrection

Every person will be raised up. The saved unto life everlasting; the unsaved to eternal condemnation (Jn. 5:28,29).

IX. SOTERIOLOGY — SALVATION

A. Repentance

We believe that repentance is a prerequisite to regeneration (Acts 17:30; II Peter 3:9). It manifests itself in the godly sorrow for sin, i.e., in the forsaking of sin and in turning to God (Isa. 55:7; I Thess. 1:9). It is wrought by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. An illustration of pure repentance is found in the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24). True repentance, coupled with faith, will result in forgiveness of sins (Acts 3:19).

B. Faith

Faith is fundamental to salvation and Christian conduct (Gen. 15:6). "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2). Only faith in Jesus Christ and his work of atonement on the cross saves from eternal condemnation (John 1:12; John 3:16). Faith being both the gift of God and act of man (Eph. 2:8), is based on the Word of God (John 20:30-31), giving assent to the truth, embracing and appropriating Christ as his Lord and Saviour (John 20:25-29), and then worshipping Him (John 4:20-24).

C. Regeneration

Regeneration is the impartation of a new and divine life, a new creation; not the old nature altered or re-invigorated, but a new birth from above (John 3:3-8; Eph. 2:10; II Cor. 5:17). We are made partakers of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4). A new governing power comes into the regenerated man's life, by which he is enabled to become holy in character and conduct: "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new", (II Cor. 5:17; I Jn. 5:11-12,20).

D. Justification

As regeneration has to do with the change of the believer's nature, so justification has to do with the change from guilt and condemnation to acquittal and acceptance. We have become justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24), and by the faith of Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:16; Rom. 5:1). Therefore, being justified by faith, forgiveness of sin (Eph. 1:7) is imparted to the believer, and he is fully restored to God's favor and receives access to all of God's graces (Rom. 5:1-2).

E. Adoption

Regeneration begins a new life in the soul; justification deals with the new relationship of that soul to God; and adoption admits that soul into the family of God with filial joy. Adoption deals with the position the soul holds as a child of God. It is the present position of the believer (I John 3:2; Gal. 3:26). The complete revelation of our position as a child of God is future (I John 3:1-3; Col. 3:3-4).

F. Sanctification

Sanctification has to do with our character and conduct in our Christian life. Justification is what God does for us, while sanctification is what God does in us. Sanctification exhibits the fruit of our relationship to God and manifests itself in a cordial love to the brethren and fellowmen (Gal. 5:22-23). Sanctification may be viewed as instantaneous, progressive, and complete. The believer is sanctified at the time of regeneration, that is, he is set aside for the service of God (I Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:10, 14). Then the believer will mortify the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:1-9) and "put on the new man which is renewed in the knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3:10-17; Eph. 4:22-24), and God will sanctify him wholly unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess. 5:23:24).

G. Prayer

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath. It is the pouring out of the heart to God (Psa. 42:4; Psa. 62:8). It is God's appointed method for man to obtain what He has to bestow (Mt. 7:7-11). It is but the natural way of a child to commune with his father. The possibility to communicate with God, our heavenly Father, was brought about through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:19-22), and with the help of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26) prayer is the means of appropriating the promises of the Bible.

X. ECCLESIOLOGY — THE CHURCH

1. The Church as an organism includes all regenerate believers gathered out of the world between the first and second advents of Christ, while as an organization it includes believers united for the service of Christ in any given assembly.

2. The local visible church is an institution of divine appointment and is composed of professed, baptized believers in Christ; voluntarily joined together and meeting at stated times to worship, to fellowship, to observe ordinances, and when necessary to administer and accept discipline.

XI. ESCHATOLOGY — THE LAST THINGS

A. Second Coming of Christ

We believe in the personal, visible, imminent, premillennial return of Christ (Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; John 14:3; Titus 2:13; Rev. 5:9-10; Rev. 20:4-6). As the first coming covers a period of events, so also His second coming covers a period of events, such as the rapture (I Thess. 4:13-17; I Cor. 15:50-52), the great tribulation (Mt. 24:21; II Thess. 2:3-10), the revelation of Christ at the end of the great tribulation period (Mt. 24:29-31), the Millenium Age (Rev. 20:1-9), and The Great White Throne judgment (Rev. 20:10-15). The day nor the hour of the beginning of Christ's second coming no one knows (Mt. 24:36-42), but we can know when it is near at hand (I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 3:1-5; James 5:1-9; Mt. 24:14, 32; Mt. 24:32-34). This hope of the Second Coming of Christ to receive His own (I Thess. 4:13-17) is a purifying element in the life of the believer (I John 3:3), and a warning to the unbeliever (Matt. 24:42; II Pet. 3:10).

B. The Resurrection

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust (John 5:28-29; I Cor. 15:22) to receive the things done in the body (II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12). The believer's body shall be fashioned like unto His glorious body (Phil. 3:21), but there is no description of the body of the unbeliever.

C. Recompence of the Just and the Unjust

1. The believer's works will be judged according to his deeds here upon earth (I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12). He will receive rewards or crowns for his service (James 1:12; I Peter 5:4; II Tim. 4:8; I Thess. 2:19; Rev. 4:4; I Cor. 9:25; Rev. 3:11).

2. The unbeliever's wage for sin is death (Rom. 6:23), and in the end will be judged according to his works (Rev. 20:11-15).

D. The Final State

1. The wicked after death will be in torment (Luke 16:23) until the final judgment at the Great White Throne when he will be eternally separated from God and cast into the lake of fire or more commonly known as everlasting hell (Matt. 25:41; John 3:36; Rev. 20:14-15).

2. The final state of the believer is far better than this present life in the body (Phil. 1:23; I John 3:2; Rev. 14:13); his final and eternal home is in heaven, the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21-22:5).

O THAT WILL BE GLORY

When all my labors and trials are o'er,
 And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
 Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,
 Will through the ages be glory for me.
 — C. H. Gabriel

**A STATEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN
DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH OF
GOD IN CHRIST, MENNONITE**

1952

We believe and teach:

1. That the Bible is the Word of God and the only infallible guide for man; that it is divinely inspired, authentic, and authoritative; that without this direct revelation from God we would be in complete ignorance as to the nature of creation and origin of the universe as well as the origin and eternal destiny of man. 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:12; Matt. 5:17; 24:35; John 12:48; Psalm 119:105, 130; 2 Peter 1:21.

2. That there is one eternal, self-existing, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, invisible, incomprehensible God, revealing Himself in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—three in one, one in three, co-existent from eternity to eternity. Psalm 90:2; Rom. 11:33; 1 John 5:7; Isa. 45:22.

3. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that He was and is now co-existent with the Father; that He was born of a virgin, partook of human nature but without the taint of sin; that He suffered and died on the cross, arose from the dead, and ascended into heaven; that alone through the shedding of his blood do we have atonement for sin and free access to the throne of grace. John 1:1; 3:16; Matt. 1:20,21; Col. 2:9; Luke 2:11; 9:35.

4. That the Holy Ghost is the third Person of the Godhead; that He was sent into the world by the Father and the Son; that He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and judgment; that He is the Comforter of saints and guides them into all truth. John 15:26; 16:7-13; Acts 2:1-5.

5. That the Genesis account of the creation is true and authentic; that the modern theory of evolution, which teaches a continuous natural development from the lowest to the highest forms of life, is a direct contradiction of this account and therefore cannot be accepted as truth by any one who believes in the authenticity of the Bible as God's Word. Gen. chapters 1 and 2; Heb. 1:10; Ex. 31:17; Jer. 10:12, 13.

6. That man was created an intelligent being by an immediate act of God and that in his original state he was like unto his maker in righteousness and holiness; that through transgression he fell; that in his fallen state he is estranged from God, and in him "dwelleth no good thing," and he is utterly unable of himself to return to righteousness, even his mind and conscience being defiled. Gen. 1:27, 31; Rom 7:8; Titus 1:15; Col. 3:10; Matt. 19:4.

7. That the miracles of the Bible are matter of fact statements and literally true. That they are wonderful acts through the divine power of God. Matt. 12:40; Acts 1:3; Acts 2:22; 4:16.

8. That only those who by faith, remorse of sin, and true repentance accept the atoning work of Christ are redeemed from sin; that sonship is based on the new birth, and fellowship upon obedience to God's Word. Jno. 3:3-16; Acts 4:12; 1 Jno. 1:6,7; Heb. 12:22,23; Mark 1:15; Acts 17:30; 20:21.

9. That the Church is the body of Christ composed of those who have been "born again" and have joined the visible church through water baptism; "there is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" That the same was founded by Jesus Christ, and that her primary mission is to preach the Word. Eph. 16:18, 19; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:13; Heb. 12:22-24; Acts 20:28.

10. That God has provision for the organization, government, and perpetuation of His visible Church; that He has given her authority, through the Holy Spirit, to interpret Scripture, choose needed officials, discipline members, and establish institutions to accomplish the work committed unto her; that every member should loyally support the church by a willing obedience and ready service; that the church must be kept from ultimate decay by severing stubborn, offensive members and teachers of heretical doctrine. Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Titus 1:5; Matt. 18:8,9; 15-18; Heb. 13:17; Rom. 16:17,18; 1 Cor. 5:11-13; 2 Thess. 3:10-16; Mark 4:11; Matt 16:19; 1 Cor. 5:12,13; John 7:24; Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 3:9.

11. That the church after separating willful persistent transgressors from the body shall avoid such to prevent further defilement in the church, until the excommunicated have repented and have been reaccepted into fellowship. Matt. 18:15-18; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Thess. 3:14; Rom. 16:17,18; 2 John 9-11.

12. That unto His Church is given the Commission to go "into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature;" persuading people to repent and become a member of the visible Christian Church. Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Mark 16:15-18.

13. That Penitent believers who are actually "born again" should be admitted into the visible Church through water baptism, even as they are admitted into the invisible

Church, Christ, by the new birth and the baptism of the Holy Spirit; that the Scriptures symbolically point to pouring as the proper mode of administering the rite. Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:5, 2:16, 17, 38, 41; 1 Peter 3:21; Rom. 6:3,4.

14. That God instituted the Christian ordinances, and to this Jesus' final positive command to the apostles was, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, which applies to every member of His Church. Matt. 28:20; John 13:17; 1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 2:15.

15. That Christ instituted the communion as a memorial of His suffering and death; that it should be observed as such by all believers to proclaim forth His death as oft as they observe it; that only such who are of like faith and are at peace with God and man should participate. Luke 22:19,20; 1 Cor. 10:16,17; 11:23-34.

16. That feet-washing is an ordinance instituted by our Savior to be observed literally by all believers of the same faith, in connection with the communion, as the Savior commanded and set the example Himself. John 13:4-17; 1 Tim. 5:10.

17. That every Christian woman, especially during times of worship and prayer (that we should 'pray without ceasing' should also be kept in mind), should have her head veiled with a special devotional covering, complying with the form the Church has adopted; only then is it a "sign" or "power." "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head—" or 'Sign on her head.' Sign of subjection. 1 Cor. 11:8-16; Num. 5:18.

18. That women (married or unmarried) should not have the hair bobbed. 1 Cor. 11:5, 15. But contrariwise that men should not wear long hair, but have them cut according to Scripture. 1 Cor. 11:14; Lev. 19:27; Eze. 44:20.

19. That men should not shave nor mar their beards. Lev. 19:27; 21:5; Matt. 5:17-21; Rom. 12:1,2; 9:20.

20. That the salutation of the holy kiss should be observed among the Christian believers of the same faith. Rom. 16:16; 1 Peter 5:14; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12.

21. That anointing with oil, laying on of hands and prayer should be administered to the sick who call for it in faith. James 5:14,15; Mark 6:13; 16:18.

22. That marriage was divinely instituted for the propagation, purity and happiness of the human race; that it receives divine sanction between one man and one woman

only; that the bond is dissoluble only by death or fornication; that there should be no marriage between a believer and an unbeliever, nor between members of the church and other denominations. 1 Cor. 7:39. "She is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." Gen. 2:18; Mark 10:2-12; Rom. 7:2; Matt. 5:32; 19:3-12.

23. That the Church and the world are distinctly separate institutions with aims, tastes, and attachments essentially different; that for Church members to be conformed to the world is sinful: By the way of dress, socials, picnics, shows, fairs and the like worldly amusements, etc. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matt. 6:24; John 18:36; Rom. 12:1,2; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 John 5:15,16; Titus 2:11-14; Eph. 5:11.

24. That covetousness is idolatry and a gross sin of the present age, and that all Christian people should earnestly resist and condemn it; they should beware of greediness and deal honestly with all men, never taking advantage of anyone, ever abstaining from usury; "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Ex. 20:17; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Tim. 6:6-10; Usury Ex. 22:25; Deut. 23:19; Neh. 5:7, 11, 12; Psalm 15:5; Prov. 28:8; Isa. 24:2; Jer. 15:10.

25. That Christian people should be "temperate in all things" lawful; that they should abstain from the use of intoxicants, tobacco and kindred carnal habits; that they should not seek popularity, worldly power, nor offices, nor desire any of the follies of this world; "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." 2 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:4; 1 Cor. 9:25; Gal. 5:24; 1 Thess. 5:22; Judges 13:4; Hab. 2:15; Prov. 23:29-32.

26. That pride is an abomination in the sight of God; that humility and contrition characterize God's people in whom is not found an haughty overbearing spirit. "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Luke 14:11; Prov. 6:16,17; "pride goeth before destruction" 1 John 2:15-17; Prov. 16:18; James 4:6.

27. That God's people should be pure, holy, devout, reverend, with "chased conversation coupled with fear," not yielding to the lust of the flesh; therefore vulgar conversation, secret vice, and other improper and sinful conduct which gives rise to social evils are entirely outside of the realms of Christian living. 1 Peter

1:15; 2:12; 3:1; 2 Peter 3:11-14; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:19-25; 1 John 3:3; Heb. 12:14.

28. That Christian people should be clothed in modest apparel; that the wearing of jewelry, costly array, fashionable attire, gaudy dress, and bodily ornamentation should be strictly avoided by all believers; "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind." Rom. 12:1,2; Isa. 3:16-24; 1 Tim. 2:9,10; 1 Peter 3:3-5; 1 John 2:15-17.

29. That the letter and the spirit of the Gospel are emphatically against strife, contention, and carnal warfare; and that therefore no believer should have part in carnal strife, whether among individuals, in suits at law, or in conflicts among nations. The non-resistant doctrine was taught and exemplified by Christ and the apostles and adhered to by true Christians until the present time. Matt. 5:38-45; 26:52; John 18:36; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Rom. 12:17-21; 2 Cor. 10:4.

30. That under the Gospel dispensation the swearing of oaths, for any purpose and for all circumstances, is forbidden. Matt. 5:34-37; James 5:12.

31. That there should be a complete separation of Church and state; that though "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," we should be "subject unto the higher powers," submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." Nevertheless we owe our first allegiance to God. John 18:36; Acts 5:29; Rom. 13:1-5; Heb. 11:13.

32. That believers should have no part in secret or oath bound organizations and that membership in them disqualifies anyone for church membership; since labor unions and fraternal organizations have similar characteristics, they should be considered in the same light. John 18:20. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

33. That insuring one's life and property in worldly insurance companies is contrary to the Word and will of God. Christians should not put their trust in speculative companies, but in Him who has numbered the very hairs of our head. Psalm 118:8; Jer. 49:11; Matt. 6:19-34; Psalm 10:14; Phil. 4:6.

34. We believe in the personal, imminent second coming of the Lord Jesus, which is the blessed hope of the believer. That He will come, not in humiliation, nor to literally reign here on earth with His people, but in great glory to receive His own and judge the world in righteousness. Matt. 24:29-31; 42:44; 25:31,32; Mark 13:24-27; Titus 2:13; Acts 1:11; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 1:7; 20:11-15.

35. That there will be a bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust. Thus in the last day all men who shall have died or fallen asleep, shall be "raised up" and made alive through the incomprehensible power of God. And that they, together with those who will still be alive and remain, shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet; that they shall be placed before the judgment seat of Christ, and the good be separated from the wicked; then everyone shall receive in his own body according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil. Dan. 12:2; John 5:28,29; 1 Cor. 15; Matt. 22:28-32; 1 Thess. 4:13, 17; John 11:24,25; Rev. 20:13.

36. That all who reject the blood atonement of Christ will have their part in that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone and where the smoke of their torment ascendeth forever. Psalm 9:17; Matt. 25:41-46; Rev. 14:11; 20:15; John 1:29; Matt. 20:28; 1 John 2:2; Acts 4:12; 1 Peter 1:18-20; 2 John 7.

37. That the righteous — saved, blessed and glorified — will spend eternity in the realms of endless bliss and glory. Matt. 25:34, 46; 2 Cor. 5:1; Rev. 22:5; Dan. 12:2,3; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1-5; 14:13.

Articles of Faith of the Church of God In Christ, Mennonite

1961

1. The Godhead

We believe in God and confess with our Martyr brethren's confession which they composed at Amsterdam, October 7, 1630, (See Funk's edition of Martyr's Mirror on page 32) which is as follows: "We believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that there is one only eternal, incomprehensible, spiritual Being, which in Scripture is called God: to whom alone is ascribed omnipotence, mercy, righteousness, perfection, wisdom, all goodness, and omniscience, and who is called a fountain of life, and the source of all good, the Creator of all things, and the Preserver of the same: who in the Old Testament bears various appellations—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God Schadai, the God Jehovah, the God of Israel, I am that I am, the Alpha and Omega, etc.; but who in the New Testament is called by three distinct names—God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, whom we confess to differ thus far, namely: that the Father, as far as He is Father, is another than the Son, and the Son as far as He is Son, is another than the Father, and the Holy Ghost, as far as He is the true Holy Ghost, is another than the Father and the Son, and that they, although differing in name, are nevertheless in their divine nature and attributes, one only, undivided God, according to the testimony of the apostle. 'For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.' I John 5:7."

We confess, that God, the Father is the head of Christ His Son, and that the Father through Him created all things; the heaven and the earth, the angels in heaven and man on earth, and placed each in their position and calling. Psalm 90:2; Rom. 11:33; Isa. 45:22; Deut. 33:27; Mark 12:29, 30; Col. 1:16, 17.

2. The Fall of Angels

A portion of angels have fallen and have become dark spirits. Satan also deceived man, Adam and Eve, bringing them to the fall. Through their disobedience and fall came sin, and through sin came death over the human race. Gen. 3; Rom. 5:19; II Pet. 2:4.

3. Fall of Man

God, who is love, would not that man should be lost and forever separated from Him; therefore He promised to send His Son to be the Redeemer and Savior of the world; who in due time was born, and according to the promise, the seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head and through His death, fallen man is restored. Gen. 3:6, 15; Isa. 53; Rom. 5:12; Matt. 1:21.

4. Repentance

We believe in a true conversion, justification and new birth. In a true conversion there is sincere sorrow of sin and transgression, and condemnation thereof. The justification is obtained through conversion when believing upon the wrought-righteousness of Christ, becoming liberated from the debt of sin and judgment, whereby we are "born again" and renewed unto the image and nature of God through the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Luke 24:27; John 1:29; 3:3; Acts 20:28; Rom. 1:17; 5:1; Gal. 3:26.

5. Baptism

We confess that baptism is an ordinance commanded of God, and that all sinners who are converted, born again,

and justified are to be baptized with water in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We believe that the water is a symbol of an inward grace of faith in the triune God through whom the convert received remissions of sins when he was "born again."

So we believe that the baptized converts not only become united with the Father, the head of Christ, but also with the Son and the Holy Ghost; consequently they are baptized through one spirit into one body and made partakers of all power which flows from the Father, and all ministries ordained through the Son, and all gifts which are imparted through the Holy Ghost. Since God has entrusted baptizing through His Son unto His ministers, who are united in one covenant with His Church, who also believe in these significations as visible proof of forgiveness of sins and who with a good conscience joined the Church of God as the medium of the inward life. Therefore, we believe when a person unites with an organization outside the Church of God, receiving the symbol of water, it does not signify the truth, although being baptized upon forgiveness of sins.

We consider all baptisms which are not officiated by the true ministers of the Gospel upon faith in God and His Church, unevangelical. Therefore as long as such scattered children of God are satisfied with their baptism in such a church, we cannot receive them, for the Church of God is to be in unity. Their living in separation from this unity, justifies the conclusion that their teaching is unevangelical, therefore the doctrines as well as the baptism officiated by such organizations should also be so considered. Those who wish to join God's Church, should unite with the ordinances of God taught in His Word. Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; I Cor. 12:12, 13; Eph. 4:4.

6. Lord's Supper

Concerning the Lord's Supper we believe that true believers, who through one Spirit are baptized into one body, should be partakers of it after a thorough self-examination. When under certain conditions, impure and irreconcilable members take too much time in becoming worthy of the Lord's Supper, which should not hinder the Church to observe the Lord's Supper, such members should wait until they become reconciled, or have let themselves become reconciled. However, the Church should spare no effort in trying to restore peace with all members as far as possible, so that all may have the opportunity to observe the Lord's Supper at the same time. Luke 22:12-20; I Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23,32.

7. Feet Washing

We believe in feet washing of the saints as we read in John 13 and I Tim. 5:10. See "Mirror of Truth." Page 172.

8. Calling of Ministers

We believe in the mediate and immediate calling of the ministers. We believe that Moses and the prophets were called directly, and believe that Christ Himself chose the apostles, sending them out to preach the Gospel and organize churches. We believe that God called Paul directly without the instrumentality of man into his office, as we see in Gal. 1. We do not consider the laying on of hands on Paul in Acts 13, an ordination into his office, but an imploration of blessing for the special calling. We hold and believe that the Lord chose the apostle immediate when the Church was in good standing, and so much the more would He do so when the Church is in a darkened condition to confirm His promise, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (the Church), which had already in the past been established.

According to the testimony of the Scriptures, that after a godly evidence and decision of the Church, and by the Scriptural examination, ministers should be chosen (mediate call) and ordained into the office by laying on of hands. In case through prayer and fasting a decision cannot be brought forth, then in the most extreme need, it is permitted to choose by lot. We also believe that the gifts of the ministries are revealed, (although not in every instance), through the spirit of revelation, at the time of ordination by the laying on of hands; the spirit of revelation, is the "witness of Jesus." We also believe that the Lord has in a measure imparted unto us the "witness of Jesus," the spirit of revelation.

We do not believe that women are called to the office to preach the Gospel; neither have we any proof in God's Word that they did.

According to the principle of creation and the result of the fall of man, women are to be in subjection unto their husbands, and not permitted to teach, nor to usurp authority, for it is unbecoming for a woman to teach in public meetings. Women and virgins may prophesy in family circles and labor for the Lord. Luke 6:13-16; Acts 1:24-26; I Cor. 12; Eph. 4; I Tim. 1:18; 2; 4:14; II Tim. 1:6; Rev. 19:10.

9. God's United Church

We believe in one true, united, organized, visible, Church of God, which constitutes the true believers, which is the pillar and ground of the Truth, unto which she is called for a light unto the people. John 17; I Cor. 12; Eph. 4; 5:22, 23; I Tim. 3:15; Heb. 12:22, 23; Rev. 1:11; and chapters 2 and 3.

10. The Scriptural Guide

We believe, that the Holy Scriptures are the guide, whereby all doctrines and oracles must be governed; for they are given of God unto us as a guide for the way we should live.

We believe that the Church of God is the supreme judge which God has here on earth for gospel matters; therefore, all elders, ministers and laymembers who at any time, conceive anything different from the Church, should place this before the Church of God, that it may be proved, before they labor therewith. We should walk in the same rule; and when anyone apprehends anything else, let the Lord reveal, whether it will stand or not. A spirit that labors in division, is a sectarian spirit; and after they are thus proven by the Church with the Word of God, they should be dealt with according to the Holy Scriptures, as is written in our article of confession "Excommunication." John 5:39, 40; Rom. 16:17; II Tim. 3:16, 17.

11. The Relation of the Old and New Testament

We recognize a definite relation between the Old and New Testaments. The code of laws in the Old Testament (known as the Law) "was added because of transgressions," Gal. 3:19. It consists of three codes: 1. Moral Law: Matters of right and wrong pertaining to our conduct toward each other and our duty to God. 2. The Civil Law: Such as applied to matters of government, the camp and march of the children of Israel. 3. Ceremonial Law: Matters of worship, as the tabernacle and offerings typifying Christ. The Ceremonial law (being mostly types and shadows) was fulfilled and ended in Christ and His kingdom. Col. 2:13-17. But the moral code of God's law was embodied in the New Testament, and is given its full ministration in its application under grace, through the Spirit of the Gospel, rather than being annulled. Matt. 5:17-19.

By this perfect rule, Psa. 19:7, now written in our hearts, Jer. 31:33, we can judge between the true knowledge

of God and the destructive nature of sin; it serves to, and points out the absolute necessity of the atonement as the only means by which transgressors can be reconciled to God.

The Law is a system of "instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." II Tim. 3:17; it teaches the difference between moral good and evil. It ascertains the truth of that which should be done and left undone, thus having in view purity and holiness and the glory of God.

"The law is spiritual," Rom. 7:14, and by the Spirit and grace of God in Christ is loved and obeyed. "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." Psa. 119:97. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law." I John 3:4. "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven," Psa. 119:89.

12. Marriage

Concerning marriage, we believe that the Lord founded and blessed it in the Garden of Eden. We believe a marriage in the Lord is only when two believers are joined together who have, through the same Spirit, been baptized into the body of Christ the (Church).

When a member (brother or sister) of the Church of God marries outside of God's Church, we consider such disobedient, and he should be excommunicated; because he joins in a marriage in disobedience to God and His Word. Therefore he cannot be reaccepted until he thoroughly repents of his disobedience. The disobedience of such a marriage consists, in that the member in a carnal manner has chosen and united with a non-member; therefore they must both repent before they can be accepted into the Church of God.

But in case the excommunicated member should repent of his transgression, and the other party remain disobedient, then it must needs be that the fruit of the returning member will manifest itself by abstaining from the intercourse of his consort which was the cause of his fall and excommunication. But when no repentance will follow in the disbeliever and the expelled member continues to live with his consort in the matter he or she were united, then we cannot believe this to be fruit of repentance; for after a member has been excommunicated for the transgression of such forbidden marriage, and then afterwards be reaccepted and yet continue to keep and live with the disobedient consort as formerly, this would cause the excommunication as well as reacceptance to become a groundless transaction.

In I Cor. 7, the Scriptural teaching is given how to deal where two unbelieving persons were joined in marriage, and afterwards one repents and the other does not; which Scripture cannot be otherwise applied. Gen. 1:27, 28; Matt. 19:4; I Cor. 7; 11:3; Eph. 5:21-33; I Tim. 3:2-13.

13. Divorce and Remarriage

We believe that the Lord prohibited divorcing excepting in case of adultery.* Yet we do not believe that a brother or sister should apply for a divorce. We understand the Savior's expression in Matt. 19:9, as did the Martyr brethren in their 33 articles of faith as we read in Martyr's Mirror," page 387, article 25, when they expressed as follows: "And thus re-establishing marriage between one man and one woman, and so inseparably and firmly binding the bond of matrimony, that they might not, on any account separate and marry another, except in case of adultery* or death." Also read in Menno Simons part 2, page 311.

*fornication—King James version.

However, when such problems arise, the ministers in charge shall ask help of elder ministers, including also the Church Problems Committee. The undertaking of such difficult work shall be done in fellowship with the local congregation.

14. Oaths

We believe under the gospel dispensation swearing of oaths for any purpose and for all circumstances, is forbidden. "But let your communication be, yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" Matt. 5:33-37; James 5:12.

15. Nonresistance

We believe, all who are in the kingdom of Christ, whose kingdom is not of this world, should be nonresistant. The Gospel prohibits all fleshly and legal revenge, and compulsion, therefore the members of God's Church cannot be permitted to serve in any office of the magistracy, which requires them to bring transgressors into judgment by the power and authority of law.

We base our conclusion on Scriptural teachings that we shall not go to the polls and vote for men who are to bear the sword, and with the power and authority of the magistracy subdue nations and govern the people; for we believe, when voting for such officers we are under obligation to support them in carrying out the execution of legal judgment.

We believe it is inconsistent for a nonresistant man to cast his vote for an officer, who is required to use the authority of the law. Isa. 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3; Matt. 5:38-45; John 13:34, 35; 18:36; Matt. 10:17-25; II Cor. 10:4.

16. Official Statement

On Peace, War, and Military Service—as believed, taught and practiced by Jesus Christ, the Apostles, and faithful church fathers, including Menno Simons.

The Savior distinctly taught that His followers should not resist evil, nor defend themselves with carnal weapons when He said: ". . . My kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence," John 18:36. And in the Sermon on the Mount He said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," Matt. 5:43-48. While this is just and right, some will have us understand that in case we are sorely pressed and the authorities require us to help defend the nation that we should then obey them, and that the above has reference in case of self-defense. To those we reply that the Jews to whom the Saviour was speaking and teaching understood Him as we do when they said: "What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on Him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." John 11:48. Here we see the Jews feared if they would permit the Saviour to teach His doctrine all men

would finally believe on Him and become defenseless, consequently the Romans would come and take their place (homes) and not only this, but their nation. Therefore, if we are true followers of Jesus Christ, we must obey His teachings.

His teachings were proven by His actions. When the soldiers were sent to take Him He did not resist. It was not that He lacked power, for He said: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Matt. 26:52-54. Now, we might do as the authorities request, when they want us to take carnal weapons, but how would our Lord's will be fulfilled?

Therefore, that Jesus might fulfill His heavenly Father's will, He did not use the power to resist; but permitted them to take Him, and suffered even unto death. Thus we should be minded to suffer even unto death, if requested to do that which the Word of God forbids. I Pet. 4:1; II Tim. 2:11-13.

On occasions when His disciples lacked understanding, as when Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, Jesus said: "Put up again thy sword into his place: for they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," Matt. 26:52. And again: "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. . ." Luke 9:54-56. Thus we are taught not to employ such methods. In addition to the above Scriptures the Apostle Paul states in II Cor. 10:4, 5, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds; Casting

down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

This has been the teaching and practice of our forefathers, as during the Dark Ages, when thousands suffered and were martyred because of their faith which included the peace loving nonresistant principles; thus following the example of the Lord. Read Martyr's Mirror, and Magistracy and War, wherein the nonresistant teachings of Jesus are thoroughly explained.

During crucial times the noncombatant question arises, when we are told we can do much good for the sick, wounded and suffering if we do hospital service, which is termed noncombatant service. We have considered this from every angle, and believe that we thereby indirectly become responsible for the shedding of blood. It is forbidden in God's Word to take up arms to shed blood. God's Word and the laws of the country forbid to rob and steal, however if we do not actually rob or steal, yet take care of those who do steal, who thereby become wounded; are we not indirectly responsible for stealing?

Brother John Holdeman writes: "There are some who allow attending the sick and wounded, and building bridges and fortifications, and whatever is necessary to the service of war: they refuse to bear deadly weapons and to shed blood. But they do not properly consider the matter . . . To be kind to the sick and wounded, is our duty when we can do so as an act of love and, not as a soldier," etc., etc. Read Magistracy and War, in Mirror of Truth, page 393.

The Apostle Paul writes: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an in-

fidels? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty," II Cor. 6:14-18. We believe the principles of the Gospel are opposed to war in any form. Therefore it is inconsistent to be under the military arm ministering to the sick, the wounded and the suffering.

It is the spirit of Jesus and the Gospel to be kind to the sick, the wounded and the suffering; consequently this divine nature will be in all His children, for they are born of Him. Therefore we teach to do as the Good Samaritan did. Luke 10:25-38. And as the Apostle Paul stated: "Let him labor working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Eph. 4:28.

It is our duty to be diligent, and economical, to assist the needy, to spread the Gospel, etc. But this would be separate from the military organization. It is a Christian duty to share with the afflicted and suffering and to help bear their burdens; therefore this is OUR duty. We should be liberal with our financial means, doing what we can to help relieve the suffering; thus manifesting the nature and spirit of Christ. The Apostle Paul said: "I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts 20:35.

We believe and teach it is the responsibility of every Christian to be kind and respectful to the authorities and be submissive when it does not conflict with the teachings, the Spirit and the love of Christ. "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said; We ought to obey God rather than men," Acts 5:29. Jesus with His disciples took no part in the arm of force or violence. May our Heavenly Father grant each one wisdom to know what to do in every respect, and strength to fulfill His divine will.

17. Excommunication

We believe in excommunicating offensive members for threefold reasons; The first is to retain the Church in its purity; the second is to so reprove the transgressor that he may be ashamed and repent; thirdly, that the Church may not be blasphemed by the world.

Grave sins, such as fornication, covetousness, idolatry, drunkenness, premeditated lying and defrauding, should be excommunicated without previous admonitions. I Cor. 5:11. Heretics should be dealt with as we read in Titus 3:10, 11; and brother sins according to Matt. 18:15-17.

In critical times, excommunication should be dealt with in less haste and with painstaking care.

The excommunication should be done through the power in the death of Jesus Christ. All disobedience will be judged by the obedience of Jesus Christ; therefore, we all with an earnest zeal should seek to exemplify the obedience of Christ in our hearts, so as to fulfill our obedience by a true repentance and confession of our sins, that as much as possible all offences may be removed in critical times, as was the case with the Corinthians, that the disobedient may be judged in power through our obedience in Christ. Matt. 18:15-18; I Cor. 5; II Cor. 13:1, 3, 10.

18. The Avoidance

We believe according to the Holy Scriptures that all excommunicated members should be avoided in all spiritual

and doctrinal fellowship, as in the Lord's supper, greeting of peace, etc.

Nowhere in the Gospel is the Greek word, "Sunanamignusthai" used to convey spiritual fellowship. In I Cor. 5:9, 11, Paul uses this word to command the avoidance in temporal matters and the use of this word in II Thess. 3:14, is sufficient to establish the avoidance in temporal matters. The "Martyrs Mirror," "Menno Simon" and "Mirror of Truth" clearly convey this concerning the avoidance. We are united with the confession of the Martyrs; that the separation in I Thess. 3:6, is to be understood in temporal matters, and in like manner with I Thess. 3:14; Rom. 16:17. See Martyrs Mirror page 390, articles 29.

We do not believe in a withdrawal which is limited to only withdraw from the Lord's Supper, feet washing, kiss of peace and brotherly counsel. We believe that the holy kiss should not be withdrawn before the excommunication. Matt. 18:17; Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 5:9-11; II Thess. 3:6, 14; Tit. 3:10.

19. Nonconformity to the World

(a) Worldly amusements: We believe it is detrimental to Christian growth and welfare to attend places or establishments of worldly entertainment as theatres, amusement parks, public swimming pools, sports arenas, fairs, etc. I John 2:16; Gal. 5:16, 17; Col. 3:5; I Thess. 5:22; Titus 2:11-15; II Tim. 3:1-4.

(b) Sinful Habits: In accordance with the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, we believe that brethren living inconsistently in such things as using tobacco or intoxicating liquors as a beverage should be admonished according to the teachings of the Scriptures, and cannot be used in responsible positions. Rom. 16:17, 18; II Thess. 3:6, 14, 15.

(c) Modesty in Dress: We believe that the Gospel does not give any regulations in what manner the cut of our clothing, should be; but costly clothing, adorning and plaiting of hair, and the wearing of gold and pearls are forbidden. The useless things and new fashions of pride and such manner of cut of dress that are brought in and accepted which conforms us to the world is sin. We should dress modestly according to Christian rule, and not offensively.

(d) Wearing of Beard and Cut of Hair; We believe the Scriptures teach the wearing of the beard by law of creation, Gen. 1:31, and by moral law, Lev. 19:27, and confirmed by Christ, Matt. 5:17-20. Thus to shave or mar the beard is not in keeping with the Word of God. But we believe order and discretion should be practiced according to wisdom and sound teaching, both in wearing the beard and the cut of hair. Rom. 9:20; I Cor. 11:4; 14:40.

20. Method and General Procedure of Choosing and Ordaining a Minister

(a) We believe and teach that whoever wishes to unite with the Church of God must according to the Scriptures, be born again (John 3:1-6), and have a heart-felt experience and knowledge of salvation, through repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, (John 3:16-18). upon which we receive remission of sins through the atoning blood of Christ. Water baptism is administered upon the confession of faith.

(b) All such regenerated brethren are taught to labor in whatever gifts or talents God may have given them and to be faithful in all things. Therefore in whomsoever the gifts of the ministry appear, or is manifest, such brethren are encouraged particularly by the elders to prepare themselves by study and reading, and whatever may be in accord with such a call. I Tim. 4:12-16.

(c) After such brethren have proven their consecration and ability and in the different activities of the Church by faithful services and intelligent practice, the need being apparent for such service, the Church then is called into council, and if united to hold an election, the elder (with two or three elders being present) then shall conduct an election in which the whole membership of the congregation participates after reading and appropriately commenting upon such Scriptures as I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. After a prayer for guidance an election (as a rule by ballot) is held, with the unity of the Church required.

(d) The brother receiving the needed votes to elect is then examined as to soundness in faith and practice, as well as the qualifications required in the Scriptures, in particular such passages as I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Upon satisfactorily meeting such requirements, being found blameless, the brother is then ordained by an elder by the laying on of hands and prayer in the presence of the congregation and whoever wishes to attend. Thus he becomes a duly ordained minister, beginning his labor in the Christian ministry, for which he is hereafter recognized, trusting in divine increase of grace and ability.

(e) We appreciate an ample education, but do not necessarily require such learning as an absolute essential qualification; but consider an infilling of the Holy Ghost of utmost importance and vital to success in the gospel ministry to which he is called.

21. Divine Healing

"Is any sick among you? let him call the elders of the Church and let them pray over him," James 5:14. And the Savior says . . . "They shall lay hands on the sick . . ." Mark 16:18. We believe the ministry and gifts of healing should be encouraged, and practiced in the fear of God, and by direction of the Word, and the Holy Spirit. The anointing with oil, laying on of hands and prayer to be administered by the ministry or by their approval. But carefulness should be exercised to guard against impure and extreme practices common among professing Christians.

22. Devotional Covering

We believe and recognize that the sisters should wear a Christian devotional covering during worship as well as in praying and in prophesying, as a sign of subjection. I Cor. 11:1-16. Give special attention to verse 10.

23. Usury

We believe it to be unscriptural to put our money into usury and gain in banks and investment stocks and other world-like extorting ways of gain. For we are not to have fellowship with works of darkness, but instead to reprove them as we read, "And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

The Lord says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." Also read I Tim. 6:6-12.

In regards to usury, the Mosaic law says, "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury for anything that is lent upon usury: Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury." But now our Saviour does not say, that we may now also take usury of our brethren; O! no, the very reverse; namely, "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the highest." Deut. 23:19-20; Luke 6:35; also read Menno Simons complete works part 1, page 137, part 2, pages 27, 341, and Peter Peter's works page 340, 341 (German) and Martyrs Mirror pages 340 and 341.

24. Christian Nurture of Children

In regards to the training and teaching of the children, we confess, that this should be done and practiced with earnestness and zeal as the apostle Paul says: "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. 6:4. The Mosaic law also demands that we shall talk with our children concerning the Word of God, "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. 6:7. And Asaph, the Psalmist says, "We will not hide them from their children, showing the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and His wonderful works that He hath done." Psal. 78:4.

This also by the way of public instruction as well, and by having Sunday schools wherever circumstances and needs require, thereby to acquaint the children with the Holy Scriptures, so that this will assist in the opening of their understanding. This should be conducted according to the faith and doctrine of God's Church. Gen. 18:19.

25. High Schools-Colleges

We are opposed to attending high schools and colleges in so far when they are conducted with pride and high-mindedness, and where impure and false doctrine is taught and practiced.

But we do acknowledge that an ample education is profitable when used with Christian simplicity and humility. Acts 4:13.

We recommend that members who are sincere and have a conviction and burden for the cause of Christ, make the proper preparation for the work for which they feel they are called.

We further recommend or advise that such have the approval of their home ministers. In case there is no resident pastor, the Church Problems Committee should be consulted.

26. Resurrection of the Dead

We believe in a general bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust in the Great Day when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven to raise the dead and transform the living. Consequently, this corruptible shall put on incorruption and this mortal shall put on immortality, changed like unto the transfigured body of our Lord Jesus Christ, wherewith the glorified saints shall enter into eternal glory. We hold the amillennialist view of the Kingdom of Christ, and do not believe in another kingdom of glory, except that of the new heaven and the new earth, after this earth and sea with all its visible elements have passed away.

Therefore we maintain that those looking for a personal reign of Christ in a literal kingdom on earth for a thousand years are deceived and will be disappointed. We set no time regards the day of the Lord's return, for it is written: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man" Matt. 24:36. "Therefore, be ye also ready" whether it be by the message of death, or of His personal glorious appearing in that day. "Even so come, Lord Jesus." John 5:28-29. II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12-15.

Articles of Faith

OF THE

Amish Christian Church

In this Church or Camp or House of Jesus Christ prevaieth great peace and harmony, for all that believe are of one heart, of one soul, of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, where there is no secular sword nor war.

Therefore, we believe and confess that the office of magistracy is an ordinance and institution of God who himself willed and ordained that such a power should be over every country in order that thereby countries and cities might, through good policy and laws, for the punishment of evil and the protection of the pious, be governed and maintained in quiet and peace, in good civil life, without which power of authority the world, lying as it is in wickedness, could not subsist. Hence, all believers are in duty bound, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake, to submit themselves to this power, and as good subjects, to obey it with fear and reverence; willingly and without murmuring to render unto their human ordinances and law everything that is due to them, whether it be tribute, custom or excise, and to pray with a humble heart for their life and welfare, and thus to seek with a faithful heart the prosperity of the country and city in which they reside; and though they, for the word of God, may have to suffer persecution, the spoiling of their property, and death, from the authorities, they may not speak evil of them, nor resist them in any wise with weapons and defense, but commit vengeance to God alone, and expect consolation with God after this life. Rom. 12:2; Wis. 6:4; Ecclesiastes 17:14.

But if the authorities, through Christian equity, grant liberty to practice the faith in every respect, we are under so much the greater obligation of submissive obedience to them; but so far as the authorities abuse the office imposed on them which extends only to the temporal, bodily government of men in temporal things, and encroach on the office of Christ, who alone has power over the spirits and souls of men, seeking, through their human laws, to press and compel men to act contrary to the word of God, we may not follow them, but must obey God rather than men, seeing Christ has been set by God his Father above all authority and power, the head in his church; and to this Father of Spirits we are directed that in all things pertaining to the faith we should obey him.

And as the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, but spiritual, he has dissuaded and prohibited all his servants and followers from all secular government and highness, and has instituted in his church various ordinances, as pastors, teachers, helps and governments, by which the saints may be joined together, to edify the body of Christ: but the secular office he left to the secular government, under which the followers of Christ

as strangers and pilgrims, who have here no kingdom, power or continuing city, must sojourn, and fight only with spiritual weapons, which is the word of God; seeing neither Christ nor his apostles prescribed to believers any laws or rules according to which they should govern the world; therefore, we do not take any part in political affairs in any form, such as voting for officers, serving as officers of any position. we do not prosecute nor go to law in any way, nor do we take part, or serve in war in any form even if it is called non-combatant.

Neither do we take oath in any form.

Some have the impression that taking an oath is allowed and commanded if the truth be on one's side. Others pretend to abstain taking an oath and give an affirmation to confirm their yes or no. But Jesus Christ said:

Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time. (viz., to the fathers that were under the Law of Moses) Thou shalt not forswear thyself but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oath (i. e., you shall swear truthfully), not falsely, and keep your promise). I say unto you (my disciples) swear not at all (i. e., neither truthful nor falsely); neither by heaven for it is God's throne. Nor by the earth for it is his footstool, neither by Jerusalem for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by ye head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these (e. i., more than yes or no) cometh of evil. Matt. 5:33-37; James 5:12. In regard to the oath of the Christians this is Christ's own teaching and commandment.

But unto those that say that we shall swear truthful not falsely, we answer that those of old time were not allowed to swear falsely on no condition whatever, but it was commanded unto them to swear to the truth and to keep their oath unto the Lord. Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:3. And whosoever swore falsely was punished from God.

But now Jesus Christ has strictly forbidden unto the Christians that which was commanded unto those of old time.

Concerning the affirmation to substitute an oath, we believe it to be an oath even the same as if it would be called an oath, for it has to be confirmed with "This I do under pains and penalty of perjury," or some similar expression.

Jesus Christ has not allowed us to use any confirmation with our yes or no, or to what we have said, or to that which we are about to say. For we believe an affirmation is taking an oath by the earth.

Jesus Christ has prohibited all high and low confirmations or oath regardless of how they may be called or administered, but we regard it as an entire obligation to perform our "yes and no" which is binding upon our conscience.

EVANGELICAL MENNONITE CHURCH (EA)

1917/1936

ARTICLES OF FAITH

ARTICLE I.

The Scriptures.

We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures were written by men divinely inspired, and are a perfect treasure of divine instruction, and the only sufficient rule of faith and practice, that it has God for its author and Salvation for its end. II Tim. 3: 16, 17; II Pet. 1: 21; II Sam. 23: 2; Acts 1: 18; 3: 21; Ps. 119: 103; Jno. 10: 35; And truth without any mixture of error for its matter. II Tim. 3: 15; I Pet. 1: 10-12; Acts 11: 14; Rom. 1: 16. And the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried. I Jno. 4: 1; Isa. 8: 20; I Thess. 5: 21; II Cor. 13: 5; Acts 17: 2; I Jno. 4: 6.

ARTICLE II.

The True God.

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, true and living God, who is infinite, self-existent, eternal, and perfect in spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Creator and Supreme Governor, Supporter of heaven and earth. Jno. 4: 24; Psa. 147: 5; Psa. 83: 18; Gen. 1: 1; Heb. 3: 4. Visible and invisible, Rom. 1: 20, glorious in holiness, Isa. 6: 3, that in the unity of God-head there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the same in essence, though distinct in personality, and executing distinct, but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. Matt. 28: 19; Jno. 15: 26; 10: 30; 5: 17; I Cor. 2: 10, 11; Eph. 2: 18; II Cor. 13: 14.

ARTICLE III.

The Fall of Man.

We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created in holiness, that God created him in His own image, and formed him out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. But our first parents by disobedience to the commandment of God, by voluntary transgression fell from the holy and happy state of their original creation. Gen. 1: 27; 2: 7; Eccl. 7: 29; Gen. 3: 6-24; the results of which brought upon them and their posterity, sin, sorrow, and death, making the entire nature of man mentally, morally, spiritually, and physically depraved and utterly void of Holiness, destitute of love to God and positively inclined to evil, bringing him under just condemnation, to eternal ruin without defense or excuse, Eph. 4: 18; I Cor. 2: 14; Jer. 17: 9, 10; Gen. 6: 5; Tit. 1: 15; Rom. 7: 18; Eph. 2: 3; Jno. 5: 42; Ezek. 18: 19, 20; Rom. 1: 20; 3: 19; Gal. 3: 22; Matt. 25: 46; Rom. 5: 12, 15-19; Isa. 53: 6; Gen. 6: 12; Rom. 3: 9-18; 1: 18, 32; 2: 1-16; Gal. 3: 10.

ARTICLE IV.

The Way of Salvation.

(or the Word or Son of God became flesh.)

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, Eph. 2: 5; Matt. 18: 11; I Jno. 4: 10; Acts 15: 11, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, Jno. 3: 16; 1: 1-14, 29; Heb. 4: 14; 12: 24, who, being conceived of the Holy Ghost born of the virgin Mary. Luke 1: 30-35; 2: 7. Therefore as Christ the anointed Son of God and Son of

man who by the appointment of the Father, took upon Him the likeness of sinful flesh, Phil. 2: 6, 7; Heb. 2: 9, 14; II Cor. 5: 21; and by His death made full atonement for our sins, Isa. 53: 4, 5; Matt. 20: 28; Rom. 4: 24, 25; I Jno. 4: 10; 2: 2; that having risen from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and is now at the right hand of God. I Pet. 3: 22; Heb. 8: 1; Col. 3: 1, appearing in the presence of God for us, Heb. 9: 24; I Jno. 2: 1; Rom. 8: 34.

ARTICLE V.

The Holy Ghost.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father, sent by the Son, Jno. 15: 26, is the same in substance, majesty and glory with the Father and the Son, I Jno. 5: 7. That He is sent to reprove, convict, and convince the world in respect of sin and righteousness and of judgment, Jno. 16: 8-11, R. V., to bear witness to the truth regarding Jesus Christ, Acts 5: 30-32, to regenerate such who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, Jno. 3: 5, 6, 8; Rom. 8: 2; Tit. 3: 5, R. V., to comfort, teach and guide the believer, Jno. 14: 16, 26; 16: 13, R. V., and to endue them with power from on high, Acts 1: 8; Jno. 20: 22.

ARTICLE VI

A Free Salvation.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel, Isa. 55: 1; Rev. 22: 17; Luke 14: 17, that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a penitent and obedient faith, Acts 17: 30; 3: 19; Rom. 16: 26; 1: 17; and that nothing prevents the salvation from the greatest sinner on earth, but his own stubborn will, determined wretched miserable depravity, and voluntary rejection brings upon himself condemnation, Jno. 3: 19, and eternal punishment, Dan. 12: 2; Matt. 25: 46; Mark 9: 43-48.

ARTICLE VII.

Repentance and Faith.

We believe the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in the soul by the regenerating Spirit of God, Mark 1: 15; Acts 11: 18, and is manifested in genuine deep sorrow for sin, restitution, and in self-humiliation, and self-abhorrence, Luke 10: 13; Joel 2: 12, 13; Job 42: 5, 6.

ARTICLE VIII.

Justification.

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such that believe in Him is justification, Acts 13: 39; Eph. 1: 7; Rom. 4: 5; 5: 1; that justification implies pardon of sin, Rom. 5: 9; Zech. 13: 1; Acts 10: 43, and the promise of eternal life, on the principle of righteousness, Rom. 5: 17; Tit. 3: 5, 6; I Jno. 2: 25; Rom. 5: 21, that it is reckoned not because of works, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's Blood, Rom. 4: 4, 5; 5: 9; and we are brought into a state of blessed peace and favor with God, Rom. 5: 1, 2, 11; I Cor. 1: 30, 31, for time and eternity, I. Tim. 4: 8.

ARTICLE IX.

Regeneration.

We believe the Scriptures teach that man cannot be saved except he be regenerated, or born again, Jno. 3: 3, 6, 7; Rev. 21: 27, that it is effected by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, Jno. 3: 8; 1: 13; James 1: 18; Phil. 2: 13; I Cor. 30, by our voluntary obedience to the Gospel, I Pet. 1: 22-25; I Jno. 5: 1; Eph. 4: 20-24, and its proper evidence appears in the

holy fruits of repentance and faith and a personal knowledge of forgiveness of sin, removing all doubt from the heart, giving perfect peace to the soul, Rom. 5: 1; I Jno. 5: 10-13; and newness of life, II Cor. 5: 17; Eph. 5: 9; Rom. 8: 9; Gal. 5: 16-23; Matt. 3: 8-10; 7: 20; I Jno. 5: 4, 18.

ARTICLE X.

Adoption.

We believe the Scriptures teach that Adoption is a placing or receiving the position as sons of God, a change of position or relation, Rom. 9: 4; 8: 15, 23; Eph. 1: 5; Gal. 4: 5, that adoption originates in the eternal sovereign unmerited grace of God, through Jesus Christ, i. e., on the ground of what He did, Eph. 1: 3-6, R. V. that all those who believe in or receive Christ Jesus, receive the adoption of sons, i. e. they obtain a place or right as sons in the family of God. Gal. 3: 25, 26; Gal. 4: 4-7; Jno. 1: 12, R. V.

ARTICLE XI.

Sanctification.

We believe that the Scriptures teach that Sanctification is a process of setting apart, or a state of being set apart for God, Num. 8: 17; II Chron. 7: 16; Jer. 1: 5. This being a twofold work:—

1. That which is wrought for the believers in Christ Jesus. Jno. 17: 19; Heb. 10: 10, 14; I Cor. 1: 2, which is, if received through faith by the justified and regenerated child of God, instantaneous, perfect, and once for all.

2. That which is wrought in them by the blood and the indwelling of the Spirit of God, that it begins in regeneration; that it is an experimental, practical and progressive work, Prov. 4: 18; II Cor. 3: 18; 7: 1; Heb. 6: 1; II Cor. 4: 6, 7; 5: 5; that it will be final and complete, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I Thess. 5: 23, R. V.; 3: 12, 13.

ARTICLE XII.

Divine Healing.

We believe the Scriptures teach that God has made provision in the atonement for the healing of the body, Isa. 53: 3, 4, R. V.; Matt. 8: 16, 17; that it is to be administered by the elders, in the name of the Lord, by anointing with oil and laying on of hands and praying over any who are sick and desire it, Mark 16: 18; 6: 13; James 5: 14, 15.

ARTICLE XIII.

The Baptism With the Holy Ghost.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, initiates the believer into the body of Christ, I Cor. 12: 13, that it is a distinct operation of the Holy Ghost, separate from His regenerating work, Acts 1: 5; 8: 12-17; 19: 1, 2, 6; and is an experience always connected with, and has primary relation to, equipment for testimony or service, Acts 1: 5, 8; 2: 4; 9: 17, 20; I Cor. 12: 4-13, that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is an absolutely necessary preparation for acceptable service for God, Luke 24: 49; 3: 22; 4: 1; that the baptism with the Holy Ghost is for every believer who will claim his blessed privilege by faith, Acts 2: 33, 38, 39.

ARTICLE XIV.

The Church of Christ.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Church of Christ is composed of all true regenerated believers of whatever name, race, or nation, who hear His voice and follow Him, Jno. 10: 1-5, 16; 10: 28, that they are a chosen peculiar people, separate and distinguished from the world, I Pet. 2: 9; Tit. 2: 14; Deut. 10: 15, built

upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone, Eph. 2: 20; Psa. 118: 22.

ARTICLE XV.

Baptism.

We believe the Scriptures teach that water baptism symbolizes the fact of regeneration, and union with Christ, Acts 8: 36-39, and that it initiates the believer into the visible Church, Acts 2: 38, 41, 47; Mark 16: 16, and that it is to be administered to believers only, upon repentance and confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 2: 38; 8: 37; 16: 30-34, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Matt. 28: 19, that water baptism has no saving or cleansing efficacy, but is an outward sign of an internal work of grace, and of the answer of a good conscience toward God, I Pet. 3: 21; Rom. 10: 10. Therefore we cannot recognize infant baptism as valid according to Scripture.

ARTICLE XVI.

The Lord's Supper.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Lord's Supper is a provision of bread and wine, instituted by our Lord in the night of His betrayal, as symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood, partaken of by the children of God only, Luke 22: 19, 20; Mark 14: 22-24; Matt. 26: 27, 28, in commemoration of the suffering and death of their Lord, I Cor. 11: 26. The participation of the same showing the communion of the blood of Christ, and the communion and unity of the body of Christ and its members, I Cor. 10: 16, 17; 12: 12-14; its observance to be preceded by faithful examination. I Cor. 11: 27-30; also the washing of the **Saints' feet to be observed in connection with the Lord's Supper**, Jno. 13: 4-17. The Communion table shall be open for members of other Churches who are willing to observe both of the above ordinances and are living consistent Christian lives, and not living in violation of the Discipline of this Church.

ARTICLE XVII.

Marriage.

¶1—We believe the Scriptures teach that Holy Matrimony is a sacred institution ordained of God; and believers should enter into so sacred an engagement, in the fear of God, and according to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures—"Only in the Lord," Gen. 1: 27; 2: 18; I Cor. 7: 39.

¶2—The Scriptures forbid believers to unite with unbelievers in the bond of matrimony, and ministers and churches should use their influence strongly against such courtship and marriage, Deut. 7: 2, 3; Neh. 13: 25-27; II Cor. 6: 14, 15; Amos 3: 3.

ARTICLE XVIII.

Divorce.

We believe the Scriptures forbid Divorce, such as our courts grant, that will permit remarriage of the divorced parties, except in case of fornication. Matt 19: 9.

ARTICLE XIX.

Civil Government.

We believe the Scriptures teach that Civil Government is of divine appointment for the punishment of evil doers, and for the protection, interest and good order of humanity, Rom. 13: 1-7; Deut. 16: 18; Exod. 18: 21-23, and that these powers are to be prayed for, respected, conscientiously honored and obeyed, Matt. 17: 24-27; 22: 21; Tit. 3: 1; I Pet. 2: 13, 14; I Tim. 2:

1-8, except only in things which should militate against the supreme law and will of our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 5: 29; Matt. 10: 28; Dan. 3: 15-18; 6: 7-10; Acts 4: 18-20, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the prince of the Kings of the earth, Matt. 23: 10; Rom. 14: 4; Rev. 19: 16; Rom. 14: 9-13.

ARTICLE XX.

Swearing of Oaths.

We believe the Scriptures strictly forbid the swearing of oaths, Matt. 5: 33-37; James 5: 12, and that everything beyond an affirmation, which is as binding as though we confirmed it by an oath, is violating the command of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE XXI.

Non-Resistance.

¶1—Going to Law.—The Scriptures teach to "follow peace with all men," Heb. 12: 14, to be inoffensive, Eph. 4: 3; Rom. 12: 18, and it is forbidden for a disciple of Christ to seek revenge, or recompense evil for evil, of those who do us evil, Rom. 12: 17-21, and particularly is it forbidden to go to Law before the unbelievers, Matt. 5: 40; I Cor. 6: 1-8.

¶2—Carnal War-fare.—We believe the Scriptures strictly forbid those who belong to the Kingdom of Christ, from taking up carnal weapons, and engaging in warfare, II Cor. 10: 4; that after conversion their citizenship is now in Heaven, Phil. 3: 20, R. V. God Almighty commanded: "Thou shalt not kill," Exod. 20: 13; Matt. 5: 21. Christ said: "Resist not him that is evil," Matt. 5: 38, 39, R. V. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you," Matt. 5: 43, 44, 46, 48; and commands us to love one another, Jno. 15: 12, and to forgive one another, Mark 11: 25, 26; Matt. 7: 12. The Apostles strictly forbid to render evil for evil, but to overcome evil with good, Rom. 12: 17-21, R. V. By love serve one another, Gal. 5: 13-15, and to love as brethren, I Pet. 3: 8, 9; I Jno. 3: 15, 23.

ARTICLE XXII.

The Lord's Day.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week is of divine origin, commonly called the Lord's day, or Christian's Sabbath, Acts 20: 7; Jno. 20: 19; Mark 2: 27; I Cor. 16: 1, 2, and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, Exod. 20: 8; Rev. 1: 10; Psa. 118: 24, in commemoration of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, Jno. 20: 19, 26, by resting from all secular labor, except works of mercy and necessity.

ARTICLE XXIII.

The Coming of Christ.

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the blessed and glorious hope of the Church is the personal and visible return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who will return in like manner as He ascended, Acts 1: 11; I Thess. 4: 16, 17, to reign with His saints, Rev. 20: 1-6; Luke 21: 27; I Thess. 3: 13; Jude 14; Rev. 5: 10; Zech. 14: 9.

Its importance:—Matt. 24: 42, 44; Mark 13: 33-37; Luke 12: 35-37; 21: 36.

The great hope of the Church:—Tit. 2: 13; Jno. 14: 3; I Cor. 1: 4-8; II Pet. 3: 12, 13.

The greatest incentive to activity, consistent and holy living:—Matt. 24: 44-46; Luke 21: 34-36; 9: 26; Phil. 3: 20; Col. 3: 4, 5; I Tim. 6: 14; Heb. 10: 36, 37; James 5: 7, 8; I Thess. 3: 12, 13; I Jno. 2: 28; 3: 2, 3.

The greatest comfort to the believer:—I Thess. 4: 13-17. Our loved ones who had fallen asleep in Christ will God bring with Him, and we shall be reunited never more to part.

We are exhorted to comfort one another with these words, I Thess. 4: 18.

ARTICLE XXIV.

Judgment Day.

We believe the Scriptures teach that God hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world, II Pet. 3: 8, 10; Acts 17: 31, when all will be judged the wicked to endless punishment in hell and the righteous to endless joy in heaven, Matt. 25: 34, 41, 46; Rev. 22: 11; II Pet. 2: 9; Heb. 9: 27; 10: 27; Rev. 21: 6-8; II Cor. 5: 10.

Discipline of the Evangelical Mennonite Church

1949

ARTICLES OF FAITH

I. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures were given by holy men of God, who were divinely inspired, who wrote in obedience to the divine command, and were kept from error whether the truths were familiar or unknown. God is the author, salvation the objective, and by its principles all will be judged. (II Tim. 3:16-17, II Pet. 1:21, Acts 3:21, Rom. 2:1-16). The scripture is not to be broken. (Jno. 10:35). It is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried. (Psa. 119:105, Acts 17:2, II Tim. 3:16-17). It is the revelation of God Himself, speaking to man, revealing man's state by nature, and presenting the only means of his salvation. (Rom. 3:10-12, Acts 4:12).

II. GOD

We believe there is only one living and true God, Perfect, Infinite and Eternal. (Isa. 45:21-22, Eph. 4:6, I Cor. 8:6, I Kings 8:27, Psa. 90:2, 102:24-27, I Tim. 6:16). God is omniscient, (Heb. 4:13, Acts 15:18), omnipresent, (Psa. 139:7-10, Jer. 23:24, Amos 9:2-3,) omnipotent, (Jer. 10:12-13, Gen. 35:11) and is unchangeable in His being, holiness, justice, love and truth. (Mal. 3:6, Isa. 6:3, Psa. 19:9, Jas. 1:17). He is the Creator, Preserver and Ruler of the Universe. (Gen. 1:1, Heb. 11:3, Psa. 103:19, Acts 17:28). He exists in three persons, namely: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are equal in their divine perfection though distinct in personality and execute distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. (Matt. 28:19, Jno. 15:26, I Cor. 2:10, Jno. 10:30, Eph. 2:18, II Cor. 13:14).

III. JESUS CHRIST

We believe the Son was made in the likeness of men, being born of the Virgin Mary, thus uniting organically and indissolubly the divine and human natures in their completeness in the one unique person of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 2:6-11, Matt. 1:18-25, Jno. 1:14, I Tim. 3:16, Heb. 2:14). The purpose of the incarnation was redemption. He took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh (Phil. 2:6-7, II Cor. 5:21) and by His death made full atonement for our sins. (Isa. 53:4-5, Matt. 20:28, Heb. 10:9-10, I Jno. 4:10). And having risen from the dead He ascended into heaven, and is now at the right hand of God (I Pet. 3:22, Heb. 8:1, Col. 3:1) interceding in our behalf. (I Jno. 2:1, Rom. 8:34).

IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, proceedeth from the Father and the Son. (Jno. 15:26). His principal ministry, since His advent at Pentecost is to reprove or convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, (Jno. 16:8-11 see R.V.) to restrain the progress of evil until God's purposes are accomplished, (II Thess. 2:7) to bear witness to the truth preached, (Jno. 15:26, Acts 5:30-32) to regenerate those who repent of their sins and exercise

faith in Christ, (Jno. 3:5-8, Titus 3:5) to instruct, comfort and guide God's children, (Jno. 14:16-18, Jno. 16:13, Rom. 8:26) to sanctify them, (II Thess. 2:13, I Pet. 1:2) to empower them for life and service, (Acts 1:8, Eph. 3:16, I Cor. 2:1-4, I Thess. 1:5) and to quicken their mortal bodies. (Rom. 8:11).

V. MAN

A. His Creation

We believe that man was created by an immediate act of God, that he was created in the image and likeness of God, possessing personality and holiness and that the purpose of his creation was to glorify God. (Gen. 2:7, Gen. 1:27, Eph. 4:24, Col. 3:10, Eph. 1:5-6, 12).

B. His Fall

We believe that man was subjected to trial in the Garden of Eden in order to test his loyalty to his Creator. (Gen. 2:15-17). By voluntarily transgressing God's positive command and yielding to the enticement of Satan, man lost his holy state, was alienated from God, and became physically, morally, and spiritually depraved. In consequence of this act of disobedience, the entire human race became involved in sin so that in every heart there is by nature that evil disposition which eventually leads to responsible acts of sin and just condemnation. (Gen. 3:1-6, Rom. 5:12, 18, Rom. 3:10-12, Rom. 1:19-32, I Jno. 1:8-10, I Cor. 2:14, Isa. 53:6, Jer. 17:9).

C. His Redemption

We believe that God as the Sovereign Ruler must punish sin. Christ, the son of God, voluntarily offered Himself on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for sin, the just suffering for the unjust, bearing sin's curse, and tasting death for every man. Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own stubborn will, and voluntary rejection of Jesus Christ as substitute for penalty. (Matt. 20:28, Heb. 9:11, 12, I Pet. 3:18, I Pet. 1:18-21, Gal. 3:13, Heb. 2:9, Titus 3:4-7, I Tim. 2:5-6, II Cor. 5:21).

VI. SALVATION

A. (1) Repentance

We believe that the scriptures teach that repentance precedes regeneration, and is manifested in genuine Godly sorrow for sin, and a consequent turning therefrom unto God, that it involves a heart confession wrought by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. (Isa. 55:7, Mk. 1:15, Acts 11:18, Acts 3:19).

(2) Faith

We believe that faith is essential to salvation. It is that persuasion by which the Word of God is received as true (Heb. 11:1). It is both the gift of God and the act of the creature (Rom. 10:9, 10, 17; Eph. 2:8; Col. 2:12). It is a reasonable confidence based upon good evidence (John 20:30, 31; 10: 37, 38). Salvation by faith supersedes mental assent by laying hold of moral powers and relying upon them (Rom. 10:10; 3:25). It not only believes that the death of Christ is the sacrifice for sin but is a trust in its efficacy.

B. Regeneration and Justification

We believe that salvation is wholly of grace and free to all, (Isa. 55:1, Rev. 22:17, Eph. 2:8) but is conditioned solely on repentance toward God and acceptance of Christ by faith. (Eph. 2:8-9, Titus 3:5, Acts 4:12, 16:31, 20:21, II Cor. 7:10). When the sinner has met these requirements, God justifies and regenerates him. Justification is a judicial declaration absolving from punishment and restoring to divine favor. (Rom. 5:1-9, Gal. 3:11, Acts 13:39). Regeneration is the impartation of Divine life. By the operation of the Holy Spirit through the word he is given a disposition to

obey God (Jno. 3:3-5, 1:12-13, II Cor. 5:17, I Pet. 1:23, Phil. 2:13). This experience is witnessed to by the Holy Spirit. Proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith, and a personal knowledge of forgiveness of sin, perfect peace to the soul and newness of life. (Gal. 5:22-23, I Jno. 5:4, Eph. 5:9).

C. Sanctification and Baptism of the Spirit

We believe that the Scriptures teach that sanctification is both instantaneous and progressive and is made possible by the vicarious death of Jesus Christ. (Heb. 10:10, I Cor. 1:30). It is a work of the Holy Spirit, separating and keeping the believer separated from sin unto God. (Psa. 4:3). This He does by indwelling, filling and controlling. It involves a voluntary separation from sin, a yielding to God, and a putting off of the old man by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 6:13, 19, Eph. 4:22-24, Col. 3:9-10). It is the call of God. (I Thess. 4:7). It is the will and work of God. (Jno. 17:17, I Thess. 4:3). It is provided for in the atonement. (Heb. 13:11-12). It is experienced by the individual through faith and dedication. (Acts 15:9, 26:18, Gal. 2:20, Rom. 12:1). The word and the blood are the means used to accomplish it. (Jno. 17:17, Eph. 5:25-27, Heb. 9:14).

We believe that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is a distinct experience of the believer subsequent to regeneration. (Luke 11:13, Jno. 14:16, 17, Acts 1:4-5, 8:12-18, 19:1-6, Gal. 4:6). It is variously designated and referred to in the scriptures. (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4, 5, 8, 2:4, 8:15-17, 10:44, 11:15-16, Eph. 1:13). It is necessary for holiness and fruitfulness of life and endowment with power for service, (I Cor. 12:4-13, Gal. 5:22-23, Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8, 4:31), and is experienced on conditions of complete obedience to God. (Acts 5:32). It involves separation, sacrifice, self denial and death to self, (Rom. 6:11-13, 12:1, Matt. 16:24), is received by prayer, (Luke 11:13) and appropriating faith. (Gal. 3:2). We must trust the Holy Spirit's leadership unreservedly and let him work unhindered. (Eph. 4:30-32, Rom. 8:13-14, Gal. 5:16, Isa. 59:19).

VII. THE CHURCH

We believe that the church, invisible and universal, is composed of all true regenerated believers of whatever name, race or nation, who are separated from sin and vitally united by faith to Christ, the living Head and Ruler. (Jno. 10:1-5, 15:1-8, I Pet. 2:9-10, Eph. 1:22-23, 4:15-16, I Cor. 12:12-27). Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. (Eph. 2:19-22). The church local and visible is an organization made up of a company of professed believers in Christ, voluntarily joined together and meeting at stated times to worship and fellowship, to observe ordinances and when necessary to administer discipline. (Acts 2:46-47, 20:7, I Cor. 16:2, Matt. 18:15-17, I Cor. 5:1-4, Acts 6:1-6, 14:23). It is the duty of the church to give the Gospel as a witness to all men, (Matt. 28:18-20, Acts 1:8) to build itself up in the most holy faith, (Jude 20-21, Eph. 4:11-16, Acts 20:32, II Pet. 3:18) and to glorify God. (Eph. 1:1-5-6, 3:21, I Pet. 4:11).

VIII. THE LORD'S DAY

We believe that the first day of the week is of Divine origin commonly called the Lord's Day or Christian Sabbath, (Acts 20:7, Jno. 20:19, Mark 2:27-28, I Cor. 16:1-2) and is to be kept sacred for religious purposes (Exod. 20:8, Rev. 1:10, Psa. 118:24) in commemoration of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead (Jno. 20:19, 26), by resting from all secular labor except works of mercy and necessity.

IX. ORDINANCES.

A. Baptism

We believe that water baptism symbolizes the experience of regeneration and union with Christ, (Acts 8:36-39) is a public confession of the same and initiates

the believer into the visible church, (Acts 2:38, 41, 47, Mark 16:16) is to be administered to believers only, (Acts 8:37, 16:30-34) in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. (Matt. 28:19). Water baptism has no saving or cleansing efficacy. (Rom. 10:9-10, Jno. 1:12). We cannot recognize infant baptism as valid according to Scripture.

B. Feet Washing

The washing of the saint's feet was instituted by our Lord who also Himself washed the disciple's feet. (Jno. 13:4-17). This practice is encouraged in our churches where it can be used effectively as a means of growth in Grace.

C. Lord's Supper

The Lord's supper is an ordinance, instituted by Christ in the night of betrayal, to be observed by His children until He returns. It consists in partaking of the consecrated emblems of bread and the fruit of the vine which symbolizes the death of Christ for the remission of our sins and our continual dependence upon Him for our sustenance. Its observance is to be preceded by faithful self-examination. The communion table shall be open to all believers who are living consistent Christian lives, regardless of denomination. (Matt. 26:26-30, Luke 22:19-20, I Cor. 10:16, 11:23-29).

D. Dedication of Children

The Scriptures give instances where children were publicly dedicated. (I Sam. 1:28, Luke 2:22-24, Matt. 19:13-16, Luke 18:15-17). We therefore encourage parents to dedicate their children to the Lord by prayer and the laying on of hands of the ministers.

X. ESCHATOLOGY

A. Second Advent of Christ

We believe in the personal, visible, pre-millennial and imminent return of Christ. (Jno. 14:1-3, Acts 1:10-11, Mark 13:22-37). This will be accomplished in two stages. First Christ will descend into mid-air to catch away His waiting bride the church. (I Thess. 4:16-17). Then after the tribulation judgments are visited upon the apostate and rebellious world. (I Tim. 4:1-3, II Tim. 4:1-4, Matt. 24:21, II Thess. 1:3-10). He will descend with His saints (Jude 14, Rom. 8:16-19, Col. 3:4, Rev. 19:7, 8, 19) to establish the long promised kingdom and to reign upon the earth for a thousand years. (Dan. 7:13-14, Luke 1:32-33, Rev. 5:9, 10, 20:4-6).

B. Judgments

We believe that the believer's works will be judged for rewards at the judgment seat of Christ at the time of His coming. (I Cor. 3:8-15, 4:5, 5:10, II Tim. 4:8). We believe that the impenitent wicked will appear before God for judgment at the Great White Throne after the millenium, and that they will be consigned to the lake of fire, there to suffer torment forever and ever together with the devil and his angels according as their works deserve. (Eccl. 12:14, Mark 9:43-48, Rom. 2:8-9, Heb. 9:27, Rev. 20:10-15).

C. Eternal State

We believe that after all God's enemies are consigned to their place of punishment, the present order of things will be dissolved and the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, shall be brought in as the final state in which the righteous shall dwell forever. (Isa. 65:17, 66:22, II Pet. 3:13, Rev. 21:1-7, 22:3-7).

XI. DIVINE HEALING

We believe that healing for the body has been provided in the atonement of Christ, (Isa. 53:4-5, Matt. 8:16-17) and it can be realized by God's children on conditions as set forth in Mark 6:13, Jas. 5:13-16.

XII. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A. Marriage

We believe that marriage is a sacred institution, ordained of God, and is an indissoluble union of one husband and one wife, to be entered into in the fear of God and according to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. (Gen. 1:27, 2:18, 24, Matt. 19:4-6, I Cor. 7:39).

We believe that it is unscriptural for believers to unite with unbelievers in the bond of matrimony, (Duet. 7:2-4, Neh. 13:25-27, II Cor. 6:14-15) and therefore such unions should be discouraged by our churches and our ministers are forbidden to officiate at the marriage of an unbeliever with a believer. We definitely discourage a Protestant-Catholic courtship or courtship with a follower of any of the various cults.

B. Divorce

We believe that the Scriptures forbid divorce except on the grounds of adultery, and that neither divorced party should marry another as long as both live. (Matt. 5:31-32, 19:3-12, I Cor. 6:16, Mark 10:11-12). If the offender fully repents and both agree, there may be a re-marriage except in a case described in Duet. 24:1-4. Separation without divorce is recognized but deprecated in the Scriptures. In the case of an unbeliever who is dissatisfied to live with a believer, the former shall not be forbidden to depart. (I Cor. 7:12-15).

C. Civil Government.

We believe that civil government is ordained of God for the punishment of evil doers, for the protection of the good, and to justly direct the interaction of society. (Rom. 13:1-7, Exod. 18:21-23). We, therefore consider it our duty to pray for our rulers and magistrates (I Tim. 2:1-3) and to be submissive and obedient to their authority except in things which militate against the supreme law and will of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Titus 3:1, I Pet. 2:13,14, Acts 4:19, 5:29, Matt. 23:10, Rev. 19:16, Rom. 14:9-13).

D. Oaths

We believe that the Scriptures strictly forbid the swearing of oaths, (Matt. 5:33-37, Jas. 5:12) and that everything beyond an affirmation which is as binding as though we confirmed it by an oath, is violating the command of our Lord Jesus Christ.

E. Non-Resistance

1. Going to Law

The Scriptures teach to "Follow peace with all men," (Heb. 12:14), to be inoffensive (Eph. 4:3, Rom. 12:8), and it is forbidden for a disciple of Christ to seek revenge, or recompense evil for evil, of those who do us evil (Rom. 12:17-21) and particularly is it forbidden to go to law with a believer before unbelievers (I Cor. 6:1-8, Matt. 5:25).

2. Carnal Warfare

We believe it is contrary to the teachings of Christ and the New Testament for Christians to take up arms in wars of aggression, revenge, and self defense. (Matt. 5:44, 26:51-52, Rom. 12:17-21, II Cor. 10:3-4, I Thess. 5:15, I Pet. 2:21-23, Jno. 15:12, Gal. 5:13-15, I Pet. 3:8-9, I Jno. 3:15, 23).

F. Secret Societies

We believe that all secret orders are contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures. There is nothing belonging to Christianity of which the followers of Christ need to be ashamed or to conceal from men. Therefore, under no circumstances should members be allowed to hold membership in any secret organization (Jno. 3:19, 18:20, Eph. 5:11-12, II Cor. 6:14-18), neither shall any such person be received into church membership.

G. Tithing

God is the owner of everything. (Hag. 2:8; Psa. 24:1). He has a system whereby the Christian ministry is financed. Abraham practiced it (Gen. 14:18-20); Jacob continued it (Gen. 28:20-22); Moses confirmed it (Lev. 27:30; Malachi commanded it (Mal. 3:10); and the Lord Jesus Christ commended it (Mt. 23:23). The Scriptures teach systematic giving. (I. Cor. 16:2). A blessing is promised to the liberal giver. (Lu. 6:38; Mal. 3:10-12).

SECTION III. CONFERENCE

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

a. Requirements for Membership

An Evangelical Mennonite church shall be one that has adopted as its constitution, the Confession of Faith, and Discipline of the Evangelical Mennonite Church and which has been approved for membership by the Conference.

b. Conference

The Evangelical Mennonite churches shall annually hold a conference at a time and place as may be determined by the General Executive Board.

c. Voice

The annual Conference shall be composed of all its officers, elders, ministers, ordained deacons, and appointed delegates from the various churches.

d. Delegates

Each church belonging to the Evangelical Mennonite Church shall be entitled to representation at the annual Conference by electing one delegate for every thirty (30) members, and an additional one for a fraction thereof. No member shall have a right to more than two votes by proxy. All Conference officers, and board

DOCTRINE OF FAITH,
AND
CHURCH DISCIPLINE
OF THE
EVANGELICAL MENNONITE
SOCIETY

1867

STATEMENT
OF THE PRINCIPAL ARTICLES
OF OUR
COMMON CHRISTIAN FAITH.

1. God and the Creation of all Things.

SINCE it is proved in the Word of God, that without faith it is impossible to please God, because he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of those that diligently seek Him, Hebrews 11, 6, we confess with our lips and believe in our hearts with all the pious, according to the Holy Scriptures, that there is only one true and living God; one eternal existence, and spirit without body, indivisible, infinite, mighty, wise and benevolent, the creator and preserver of all things visible and invisible. In this Godhead is a Trinity in one existence and might coeternal, namely: the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Rom. 11, 36; 1. Cor. 12, 6; 1. John 5, 7.

2. The Fall of Man.

We believe and confess, conformably to the contents of the Holy Scriptures, that our first parents, Adam and Eve, did not remain long in that glorious state in which they were created, but that as they were seduced by the cunning and deceit of the serpent and the enmity of the devil, they broke the commandment of God, and became disobedient to their Creator, through which disobedience, sin, and through sin death has come into the world ("since we have all sinned"), which consequently has come upon all men, while all have sinned, and thereby have brought upon themselves God's wrath and condemnation.

3. Re-instatement of Man through the Promise of the Coming of Christ.

In regard to the re-instatement of our first parents and their descendants, we believe and confess, that God, notwithstanding their fall, their transgression and sin, although there was no ability in them, yet did not entirely reject them, and did not wish to let them be lost eternally, but that He called them again to Himself, comforted them, and proved to them that there yet remained with Him a remedy for their reconciliation, namely: the immaculate Lamb, the Son of God, who was chosen for the purpose, before the foundation of the world, and while they were yet in Paradise, was promised for a reconciliation, redemption and salvation of them and all their descendants. John 1, 29; 1. Peter 1, 19.

4. Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and Son as true and eternal God, in one existence, majesty and glory with the Father and Son.

5. The Coming of Christ into this World and the Reason of his Coming.

We believe and confess, that, as the time of the promise for which all the devout patriarchs so much longed and waited, had come, this previously promised Messiah, Redeemer, and Savior having proceeded from the Father, was sent; that he came into the world, yea, became incarnate, that he was revealed, and that the Word became flesh. Further, we believe and confess according to the Scriptures, that, when he had ended his course and had finished his work, for which he was sent and for which he came into the world, according to the providence of God, he was delivered into the hands of the unrighteous, that he suffered under the ruler Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, was buried, on the third day rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and that he sits on the right hand of

the Majesty of God, whence he will come again to judge the living and the dead. 1. Tim. 3, 16; John 1, 14; Luke 23, 33.

6. Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for our Instruction in the Ways of Salvation.

We believe and confess also, that the Holy Scriptures contain the counsel of God, as far as it is necessary for us to know it for our salvation, indeed, that nothing which is not contained therein and which cannot be pointed out therefrom, can be made binding on a person as an article of faith, or as a doctrine, which he must receive and believe necessary in order to be saved.

The Holy Scriptures we understand to consist of those Canonical Books of the Old and of the New Testament, which at all times have been received in the Church without any doubt as such. John 15, 15.

7. Repentance and Amelioration of Life.

We believe, since the meditation of the human heart from childhood is evil, and therefore inclines to all unrighteousness, sin, and wickedness, that for this reason the first lesson of the precious New Testament of the Son of God, is repentance and amelioration of life. Therefore men must bring forth fruits meet for repentance, must ameliorate their lives, must believe the Gospel; for neither Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Church Membership, nor any other outward ceremonies, without faith, regeneration change or newness of life, can help us to please God, or to obtain consolation or promise of salvation from Him. Gen. 8, 21; Mark 1, 15; Gal. 6, 15.

8. Holy Baptism.

Of Holy Baptism we confess, that all repentant believers, who are united to God by faith, regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost and whose names are written in Heaven, upon such scriptural confession of faith and renewal of life according to the command and teaching of Christ, and according to the example and custom of the Apostles, in the exalted name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, must be baptized in water to the burial of their sins, and through the same must be united with the congregation of saints. Further, we believe in regard to baptism as Menno Simon teaches in his Articles of Faith, page 37, 38 and 29; Acts 2, 38; Mat. 28, 19, 20.

9. Church of Christ.

We believe and confess that there is a visible Church of Christ, consisting of those who, in the appointed way, repent rightly, believe rightly, and who are baptized, united with God in

Heaven, and rightly admitted into the Congregation of Saints here upon earth. 1. Cor. 12. 1. Peter 2, 9.

10. Teachers and Ministers in the Church.

We believe and confess that the Church without office and ordinance cannot continue in its growth and culture; that for this reason Christ the Lord himself, as a father in his house, has instituted his offices and ordinances, that he has given commands and injunctions concerning them, and has ordained how each one should walk therein, and have regard to his word and calling.

Further, we believe that the calling of Christian preachers and ministers happens in two ways: the godly and the ecclesiastical. Some without any interposition of man are called of God only, as was the case with the Prophets and Apostles; and some by the interposition of the pious, as may be seen in Acts 1, 14. Gal. 15, 16.

11. Breaking of Bread or Lord's Supper.

We confess or hold, likewise, such a breaking of bread, as the Lord Jesus Christ before his suffering instituted with bread and wine, and made use of with his Apostles with whom he ate, which he commanded them to observe in remembrance of Him, his suffering and his death, and that his worthy body was broken, and his precious blood was shed for us and the whole human race. Luke 22, 19, 20. Acts 2, 46.

12. The Washing of the Feet of the Saints.

We confess feet washing of the Saints which the Lord Jesus has instituted and commanded, who also himself washed the feet of the Apostles, and who has therefore given an example that we should likewise wash one another's feet. John 13, 4, until verse 17.

13. Marriage or the Matrimonial State.

We confess in the Church of God such honorable marriage of two believing persons, as God at first in Paradise ordained, and Himself instituted between Adam and Eve. Gen. 1, 27. 1. Cor. 7, 39.

14. Secular Government.

We also believe, that God has ordained and instituted power and government for the punishment of the evil and for the protection of the good; for this reason we do not despise them, violate or resist them, but we consider government as a servant of God, are subject and obedient to it, particularly in that which does not militate against the law, will, and com-

instruments of God; we pay tribute and custom faithfully, and pray the Lord for its welfare, that we may live under its protection and lead a still and quiet life of Godliness and honesty: Rom. 13, 1-7; Matt. 17, 27; 1 Tim. 2, 1-3.

15. Resistance.

As far as vengeance is concerned, by which an enemy is resisted with the sword, we believe and confess that the Lord Jesus has forbidden his disciples and followers to show vengeance and resistance, that he has commanded them not to return evil for evil, or curse for curse, but to sheathe the sword, as the Prophets foretold, to make coulters of them. Further, we believe that war and blood shedding are not conformable to the teaching of the Gospel of Christ. Matt. 5, 39-45; Rom. 12, 14.

16. Oaths.

Of the oath we believe that Christ likewise has forbidden his own to swear in any manner at all, but that he has commanded them that their communications should be yea, yea, and nay, nay. Hence we understand that oaths of every kind are forbidden, and that in place of them, all our promises, words and obligations, yea, all our declarations or testimonies of any thing whatsoever, should be established by our word, yea, in that which is affirmed, and nay, in that which is denied. Matt. 5, 34-37; 2 Cor. 1, 17.

17. Excommunication, or Separation from the Church.

We believe and confess an excommunication, a separation and Christian punishment in the Church, for amendment and not for hurt, that the pure may be separated from the impure. If any one, after he has become enlightened, has accepted the knowledge of truth, and has become united in the society of the holy, falls into such unfruitful works of darkness whereby he is separated from God, and the Kingdom of God is denied him, such person, when his deeds are manifest and made known to the Church, shall not remain in the congregation of the righteous, but shall and must be separated as a bad member and open sinner, must be put out, and in the presence of all must be punished and swept out as a leaven, until he amends. 1 Cor. 5; 1 Tim. 5, 20.

18. Shunning of the Excommunicated.

We believe and confess that when any one, either through his evil life or perverse teaching,

has so far sunken that he is separated from God, consequently also excommunicated from the Church and punished, the same, according to the teaching of Christ and his Apostles, without distinction, must be avoided and shunned in his unfruitful works of darkness by all co-partners and members of the congregation, and must be considered as a Gentile and Publican; however, he must not be held as an enemy, but he must be admonished, that he may be brought in such a way to a knowledge of sorrow for, and lamentation over his sins, in order that he may again be reconciled to his God, and His Church, and consequently may again be received into the Church. 1 Cor. 5, 9-11; 2 Thess. 3, 14.

19. Resurrection of the Dead, and the Final Judgment.

We believe, according to the Scriptures, that through the incomprehensible power of God, on the last day all persons who have fallen asleep will be again awakened, made alive, and capable of arising, and that these, together with those that then will remain in life, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, will be changed, and placed before the judgment seat of Christ; and that the good and evil will be separated from one another, and that the good or pious, as blessed, will be accepted by Christ, that they will enter upon eternal life and receive joy such as neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard nor yet entered into the heart of man; that, on the contrary, the wicked or evil, as accursed, will be cast out and banished into outer darkness, yea, into the eternal torment of hell, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. John 5, 28, 29.

**The
DOCTRINES and DISCIPLINE
of the
UNITED MISSIONARY CHURCH**

**Prior to 1947 known as the
MENNONITE BRETHREN IN CHRIST
and
still known by the latter name in the
Pennsylvania Conference**

**1951
Articles of Faith**

Article I

GOD, THE CREATION OF ALL THINGS, AND MAN

There is but one Eternal, Omnipotent, Incomprehensible and Triune God—the Father, Son and Holy Ghost—who is the Creator of the heavens and earth, and all that is therein, visible and invisible; Governor and Upholder of the same, by His wisdom and the word of His mighty power, amongst which He created man after His own image, and formed him of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul, imbued with many great gifts; placed him in the Garden of Eden or Paradise where he enjoyed sweet fellowship and communion with Him and gave him both a command and a prohibition. (Gen. 1:1; 2:1-9, 15-17; John 10:30; 1 John 5:7; Rev. 19:6).

Article II

THE FALL OF MAN

Our first parents did not remain in this glorious and happy state of their original creation, but, being deluded through the subtlety and deception of the devil, disobeyed and transgressed the command of their God and Creator, incurring upon themselves and their posterity the sentence of death. (Gen. 3:5-7, 17; Rom. 5:12).

Article III

THE RESTORATION OF MAN

Notwithstanding the fall of our first parents from the state of their original purity and happiness into a state of unhappiness, degradation and death, God devised for them a way of salvation through the gift of His beloved Son, of whom He gave promise and testified through all His prophets, and who in due time came into the world, "*tasted death for every man*," became the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and has thus "*brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel*." (Gen. 3:15; John 3:16, 17; Heb. 2:9; 11 Tim. 1:9, 10).

Article IV

THE WORD OR SON OF GOD, WHO BECAME MAN

The Son of God is the Word, the Eternal and true God, of one substance with the Father, who took man's nature upon Him by being conceived and born of the virgin Mary so that both natures, Divine and human, are perfectly and inseparably joined in Him. Therefore, He is Christ, the Anointed, very God and very man, who suffered, was crucified, died and was buried, and rose again, in order to reconcile us to the Eternal Father and to present Himself a sacrifice for both our original and actual sins. (John 1:1-3, 14; 11 Cor. 5:19).

Article V

THE HOLY GHOST

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and sent by the Son, is of one substance, majesty and glory with the Father and the Son, very and Eternally God. His office and work is to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; to regenerate such who repent of their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to cleanse the children of God and imbue them with power, stability and energy to contend earnestly for the faith of the Gospel and to comfort and lead them into all truth. (John 15:26; 16:8, Acts 1:8; John 20:22; 1 John 5:7).

Article VI

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

The canonical books of the Holy Scriptures contain all the instructions necessary to salvation, and whatsoever is not contained therein, or cannot be proven thereby, is not to be required, or believed as an article of faith, neither to be received as necessary to salvation. (John 5:39; 11 Tim. 3:15, 16).

Article VII

ORIGINAL SIN

Original sin is that corruption and depravity of the human nature in consequence of the fall whereby man has become estranged from God and is disqualified to do the will of God perfectly. (Rom. 7:21; 8:7; 1 Cor. 3:1-4).

Article VIII

FREE WILL

Man, having become so completely ruined, has neither the will nor power to turn to God, and if left to himself, would remain in his wretched and miserable condition forever. But, blessed thought, the "*grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men*;" hence, God graciously employs the means of enlightening and awakening the mind of the sinner to a sense of his poverty and wretchedness, and then extends the invitation that "*whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely*." But just so long as man refuses to comply with the requirements of God and rejects the invitation of His Word, salvation cannot be secured by him. (John 6:44; Rev. 3:20; 22:17).

Article IX

REPENTANCE

Genuine repentance toward God consists in a knowledge of, a sorrow for, and a confession and forsaking of sins brought about by the knowledge of the goodness of God and the convincing power of the Holy Spirit accompanying the truth as it is preached or read. (Matt. 3:2; Acts 20:21; 11 Cor. 7:10; 1 John 1:9, first clause).

Article X

FAITH

Genuine and saving faith is that simple trust in the promises of God in Christ through which all doubt is excluded from the heart and peace and rest are produced in the soul. According to the language of the Holy Scriptures, "*faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*." (Rom. 5:1; Heb. 11:1, 6).

Article XI**JUSTIFICATION AND REGENERATION**

Justification and regeneration imply the forgiveness of sins and a change of heart through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. *"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (John 3:3; Rom. 5:1).

Article XII**ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION**

Entire sanctification necessarily follows justification and regeneration, for by it is implied a setting apart for the continual service of God, the individual, justified and regenerated, also a cleansing from all sin and all unrighteousness, which are removed only by the application and cleansing process of Christ's blood. It is an instantaneous act of God through the Holy Spirit by faith in the atoning merits of Christ's blood and constitutes the believer holy. (I John 1:7-9).

The personal indwelling of God through the Holy Spirit in the believer is the greatest theme of the New Testament. If we are really filled with the Spirit we must have Him in our body. We will then know what it means to be quickened in our mortal flesh by the Spirit that dwelleth in us.

We, therefore, are perfect—perfectly saved—the will of God perfectly performed in the soul. We must get a Scriptural conception of the reality and possibility of such a life.

The Scriptures Speak of:

1. The sanctification of Christ, as His setting apart as a servant and the sacrifice for sin. (John 10:36; 17:19).

2. The sanctification of believers unto God. (I Cor. 1:2; I Thess. 4:3; II Thess. 2:13).

The sanctification of believers is twofold, viz:

1. That which is wrought for them, or sanctification past and perfect. (I Cor. 1:2; 6:11 R.V.; Acts 20:32; 26:18). This is the work of God, the Father, (Jude 1), and of Christ the Son. (Heb. 2:11; Eph. 5:26).

2. That which is wrought in them, or sanctification experimental and practical wrought by God, the Father (I Thess. 5:23); by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:16); by the blood (Heb. 13:12), and through the Word (John 17:17).

The divine injunctions to the child of God are, to sanctify Christ in his heart as Lord (I Pet. 3:15); to present his body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God (Rom. 12:1); to mortify his members which are upon earth; for they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Col. 3:5; Gal. 5:24; Rom. 6:6); to put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9, 10); to reckon himself dead indeed to sin and alive to God (Rom. 6:11; Gal. 2:20); to yield himself unto God for service (Rom. 6:13-16), being made pure in heart (Matt. 5:8; Acts 15:9) and a partaker of the Divine nature (II Pet. 1:4), that he may have his fruit unto holiness (Rom. 6:22).

The believer endeavouring to lead a holy life is warned against conformity to the world (Rom. 12:2); against unequal yokes and unholy alliances (II Cor. 6:14-17), and against teachers and holders of evil doctrines (II John 10, 11). He is also commanded to be filled with the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit (Eph.

5:18; Gal. 5:16); to be holy in all manner of life (I Pet. 1:15, 16); to follow after holiness (Heb. 12:14), and to cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (II Cor. 7:1), because He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one (Heb. 2:11).

Therefore, the children of God are called the saints or holy ones, holy brethren, and holy men of God (Rom. 1:7; Heb. 3:1; II Pet. 1:21). Thus sanctification is both instantaneous and progressive, and is necessary for Christian life and service, and the preparation of the saints for the inheritance among them that are sanctified. (Acts 20:32).

Article XIII**GROWTH IN GRACE**

Even though in the regenerated state we may bring forth fruit,¹ the state that we attain through entire sanctification fits us for the development of those heaven-born principles imparted to us in regeneration. (Eph. 4:15; II Thess. 1:3; II Pet. 3:18).

The child of God thus regenerated is exhorted to renounce all sin and sinful gratifications and live a life of faith. He is told not to lay up treasures on earth, nor to trust in uncertain riches, financial speculations or in the worldly beneficial societies of the present day, which weaken his faith in God and retard his spiritual growth and development, but rather follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. (Matt. 6:19-21; Heb. 10:38; 12:14).

Article XIV**DIVINE HEALING**

All sickness is the result of sin directly or indirectly. (Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:15-23; Job 2:7; Luke 13:16; Acts 10:38; John 5:14). God has made provision in the atonement for the healing of the body. (Isa. 53:3-5 R.V.; Matt. 8:16, 17; I John 3:8). The mode given us for the healing of the sick is the laying on of hands and anointing with oil and praying over them. (Mark 16:13; 16:17, 18; Jas. 5:14, 15).

Article XV**GOOD WORKS**

Good works are not conditions of life and salvation, but are the natural results of a regenerated and sanctified heart, from which, as naturally as water gushes forth from every respective fountain after its kind, and every tree bringeth forth fruit after its own nature, supreme love to God and love to man, with every other corresponding trait of Christian character, will naturally show forth themselves in all the various avocations and departments of life.

By grace are ye saved, "not by works," for when we have done all that is our duty to do, we must say, "We are unprofitable servants." (Matt. 7:16-20; John 15:5, 8, 16; Luke 17:10).

Article XVI**CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP**

The Scriptural method of supporting the Lord's work is by freewill offerings. Giving is to be considered as a part of our worship of Almighty God. It is to be entered into cheerfully out of gratitude to God for His blessings, and out of a sense of obligation to promulgate the Gospel. Since tithing antedates the Mosaic Law, was confirmed in the Law, and was approved by the Lord Jesus Christ, and since

the New Testament clearly indicates that our giving is to be proportionate, believers ought to give not less than the tithe to the support of God's work. However, our Christian stewardship in material things is not necessarily fully discharged when the tithe has been paid. (Gen. 14:20; Gen. 28:22; Mal. 3:8; Matt. 23:23; I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:6, 7; Acts 4:32).

Article XVII

SIN AFTER JUSTIFICATION

Not every sin committed after justification is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Therefore, the grant of repentance is not denied to such as fall into sin after justification. After we have received the Holy Ghost it may so happen that we may depart from grace given and fall into sin, and we may even then, by the grace of God, rise again, through the workings of the Spirit, and turn to God and receive forgiveness of our sins. (I John 2:1; Rev. 2:5).

Article XVIII

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Church of Jesus Christ is composed of all true believers who are designated His "sheep" who hear His voice and follow Him, who know Him and are known by Him, and who are a people separated from the world, "a peculiar people." Supreme love to God and love to all men (enemies included), being a true characteristic feature peculiar to them only, they may readily be distinguished from the world. Their ground and pillar of hope is that of the "apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner Stone." "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "Blessed is that people whose God is the Lord." (Matt. 16:18; John 10:1-5; Eph. 2:20; Titus 2:14).

Article XIX

BAPTISM

Water baptism has no saving or cleansing efficacy. It is a visible or outward sign of an internal work of grace in regeneration and consecration to the service of God. It is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God; hence, cannot with propriety be administered, only to such as have, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, realized the forgiveness of sins, and have the evidence of their acceptance with God. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 8:37, 38; I Pet. 3:21).

Article XX

WASHING THE SAINTS' FEET

The Lord Jesus has instituted and commanded washing the saints' feet, who also Himself washed the disciples' feet, and has thereby given an example that we "ought to wash one another's feet." (John 13:4-17; I Tim. 5:10).

Article XXI

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is the ordinance which our Savior instituted in the night of His betrayal, with bread and the fruit of the vine.

We are to observe it, to commemorate that His body was broken and His blood shed upon the cross to redeem us from the curse of sin and death.

That the bread of communion and the cup of blessing were not intended for a full meal, we infer from the language of Paul when he says: "If any man hunger, let him eat at home," and, "What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in?"

Christ draws our attention to the fact that it is not to be a natural, but a spiritual feast, when He says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith. Therefore, the Supper was instituted for the children of God only. God has also wisely directed that each one examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. (Matt. 26:26-29; I Cor. 10:16; 11:20-29).

Article XXII

MARRIAGE

Holy matrimony is a sacred institution of Divine origin, and believers should enter into so solemn an engagement in the fear of God, seeking direction and guidance of Him who knoweth to direct all things according to the good pleasure of His will and according to the teachings of God's Word. This solemn engagement should be "only in the Lord."

Believers should not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. The trouble and despair subsequent upon entering the marriage state of those whom God hath not joined together, is incalculable, and should be a solemn warning to any and all who contemplate this step, to take the matter with all sincerity of heart to God in prayer. (Gen. 1:27; 2:18; I Cor. 7:39; II Cor. 6:14, 15).

Article XXIII

CIVIL GOVERNMENT

God ordained and instituted the civil government for the punishment of evildoers and for the protection and defense of the good. We pay willingly and cheerfully tribute and customs demanded of us. We respect these powers with due loyalty, and we are willing to be submissive, subjective, and obedient to their authority, so long as not intruded upon in things which should militate against the supreme law and will of God, and pray for their protection, prosperity and welfare, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty." (Matt. 17:27; Rom. 13:1-7; I Pet. 2:14).

Article XXIV

WAR, PEACE AND SELF DEFENSE

Revenge and resistance to evil by violent means, are strictly forbidden to the followers of Christ, according to the word of Christ and the teaching of His apostles. The Word has bidden us to "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them which despitefully use you, and persecute you," "resist not evil," "avenge not yourselves," and "if thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head; be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." When Peter would have defended his Lord with the sword, he was admonished, "Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they

that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Christ said too, "*My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight; but now is my kingdom not from hence.*" Paul also taught, "*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.*" Moreover, this word which our Lord taught He exemplified in the whole manner of His life, above all in His self-sacrificing death on the cross. "*Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not.*" The whole tenor of the Gospel is in harmony with these Scriptures.

In the light of the above, we are constrained as followers of Christ to abstain from all carnal warfare. We cannot encourage participation in a conflict between nations, nor in strife between classes, groups, or individuals. In all such situations we must be "*wise as serpents, harmless as doves,*" giving ourselves wholly to the ministry of reconciliation, and fulfilling the terms of our Great Commission, to preach the Gospel of peace, and to lead men everywhere to salvation through Jesus Christ. We must be "*ready to every good work,*" ready to suffer, if need be for conscience sake, and to "*take joyfully the spoiling of our goods,*" but we cannot resist evil with evil, or return blow for blow. (Matt. 5:39-44; 10:16, 26-52; John 18:36; Acts 5:29; Rom. 12:19-21; Eph. 6:12-15; II Cor. 10:4; Heb. 10:34; I Pet. 2:21-23).

Article XXV

OATHS

Christ has strictly forbidden the swearing of oaths, when He says, "*I say unto you, Swear not at all;*" "*but let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*" It is evident that the apostles regarded it, and strictly insisted upon its careful observance. James says, "*Above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.*"

From these clear testimonies we conclude that the swearing of oaths is forbidden and not tolerated; and that anything beyond an affirmation is violating the command of our Savior. We regard our affirmation as sacred and binding as though we had confirmed it by an oath. (Matt. 5:34-37; Jas. 5:12).

Article XXVI

THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY

The call to the ministry is of such vast importance that God alone is able to decide as to who shall go forth as laborers in the vineyard of the Lord, as ministers of the Gospel.

The Savior says, "*Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest;*" and Paul says, "*How shall they preach except they be sent?*" Hence only such as the Lord has called, qualified, and sent forth to preach the Gospel can be an efficient means in His hand to further His cause, prosper the Church, and be successful in winning souls to Christ. (Matt. 9:38; Rom. 10:15).

Article XXVII

THE LORD'S DAY

We believe the Lord's Day to be of Divine origin. The Jewish Sabbath was obligatory upon those living under the law of Moses until the time of its consummation. We recognize the first day of the week as being the Lord's Day under the present dispensation, the observance of which we hold obligatory and sacredly binding upon the followers of the Lord Jesus in commemoration of the glorious victory achieved through His resurrection from the dead on that eventful day; it also having been duly and persistently observed by the Apostolic Church, and also being the day upon which the Holy Ghost was poured out on the disciples. (John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7).

Article XXVIII

THE COMING OF CHRIST

We believe that the hope of the Church is centered in the personal return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who will Himself return in like manner as He ascended. We are exhorted to comfort one another with these words. (Acts 1:11; I Thess. 4:18).

Importance. (Matt. 24:42, 44; Mk. 13:33, 37; Luke 12:35, 36; 21:36).

Object of Hope. (Titus 2:13; I Pet. 1:3-9; I Thess. 4:17; John 14:3; I Cor. 1:7, 8).

Motives to Activity and Holiness. (Luke 9:26; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:4, 5; I Tim. 6:14; I Pet. 4:2-4; Titus 2:12, 13; Heb. 10:36, 37; Jas. 5:7, 8; Rev. 2:25; 3:11; I Thess. 3:12, 13; I John 2:28; 3:2, 3; I Thess. 5:4-6).

Scoffers do not believe in His coming. (II Pet. 3:3-7, 11, 12).

He will come to those that look for Him. (Heb. 9:28).

Article XXIX

MILLENNIUM

The Millennium (Rev. 20:1-6), or day of the Lord (II Pet. 3:8), will be ushered in by the appearance of Christ in His glory (Lk. 21:27) with His Church (I Thess. 3:13; Zech. 14:5), or ten thousand saints (Jude 14), to reign on earth (Rev. 5:10; Zech. 14:9) one thousand years, during which time the devil will be bound (Rev. 20:1-6) and Christ will reign in righteousness (Psa. 46:9; 72:8, 10, 11, 17; Isa. 2:1-4) until His enemies become His footstool. (Heb. 10:13; Isa. 11:6-9; Hosea 2:18).

Article XXX

THE JUDGMENT

The Scriptures tell us that the believer has been judged as a sinner at the cross of Christ and shall not come into judgment for he is passed out of death unto life (John 5:24 R.V.). As a child in the family of God, he is being judged and chastened during his life time (Heb. 12:5-8; I Pet. 4:7; I Cor. 11:30-32), and as a servant he shall be judged at the judgment seat of Christ after the rapture (I Cor. 4:2-5; II Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10; I Cor. 3:13-15).

The Son of Man shall come in His glory and stand upon the Mount of Olives, and will judge the nations (Zech. 14:1-3; Psa. 96:13; Matt. 25:31-46), and will vindicate His people Israel.

At the close of the Millennium, God will cast the devil into the Lake of Fire, and He will sit upon the Great White Throne, and judge the wicked dead, cast death and hell into the Lake of Fire, and bring forth the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 20:10-14; II Pet. 3:13).

THE RIVER BRETHREN CONFESSION OF FAITH

ca. 1780

(known also as The Eighteenth Century Confession)

A Copy of the Confession of Faith of the Brethren*

We believe and confess a Triune, Everlasting and Almighty Being, and that a Holy, Almighty God has been from eternity, and is, and will remain, and has provided Jesus Christ as Savior of mankind before the foundation of the world; and afterward Man was created in His image; and through the devil's envy he reverted to death; thus He promised him that he was to tread upon the serpent's head; and He appeared in the fulness of time, giving for the Redemption of men favor, honor, esteem, body and blood. He reconciled God and offered a sacrifice that holds good forever, so that all who believe on Him shall not be lost, but shall have eternal life. This has all happened outside of ourselves, but to reveal this in us there appeared the healing Grace of God to convict us and to teach us that we confess that we have by nature a heart averse from God, devious and sinful. If this is confessed and acknowledged, it works a regret and sorrow and inner soul-pains; in short, the Light reveals to us the Fall into which Adam and we all have fallen; and this causes a longing, a praying, a weeping, and a calling to the promised Savior, to the World-Messiah, who died bleeding before such poor sinners. Into such an open, poor sinner's heart the Lord Jesus will and can come, holding the communion meal; that is, to bestow comfort, peace, love and trust. Then the record of sins as well as the guilt of Adam is stricken out, he receives comfort and forgiveness of sins and eternal life. A poor sinner feels and experiences that; and there the living Faith has its beginning, for Faith is a positive confidence. Here his name is written in the Book of Life, when the poor

Ed. note. This copy is taken from Carlton O. Wittlinger Quest for Piety and Obedience. Evangel Press, 1978.

sinner offers himself obediently and subjects himself to live for the Lord Jesus and to be true from now on—to the One who has accepted him in adoption. So we confess that to be a new birth, revival of the mind, revival of the Holy Spirit. Here the Lord Jesus Christ has become a Redeemer, therefore He will be and is to be a pattern, and because children love the one who bore them, so also they love the one who is born from him; and we recognize that to be a believing community through the unity of the Spirit, which is the first and real reception in faith in the community. If this is lacking, there will be a deficiency and the Water cannot give it or make it good; and because we have said the Lord Jesus has become a pattern for us, so we believe and acknowledge from the pattern in the Written Word and through the illumination of the Good Spirit that the Lord Jesus Christ instituted and commanded, as an outer sign for such newborn children, the outer baptism of water, which He himself and His apostles and the first churches practised, thereby renouncing the devil and the world and all sinful living by means of a threefold baptism in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as a sign of the burial. We believe and confess also that basically all awakened souls, becoming believers through true repentance, who were baptized in belief on Jesus, are included in Zion, and out of this Spiritual Congregation or Church are born as new men, as the dew out of the glow of morning. We also believe that the Lord Jesus instituted the communion meal and practised it with His disciples with bread and wine in the last night of agony, when He was betrayed; this they were to commemorate and after His departure they did commemorate His broken body and His shed blood, wherein also His followers stand constantly in the teaching in the Communion, in bread-breaking, in prayer and in taking the elements with steadfast hearts, praying to God with joy. Furthermore we see, believe and acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ at and during His communion meal, by washing His disciples' feet, has established, practised, and ordered it to be practised, as a sign of true humility and abasement out of love and obedience to Jesus, our pattern. Herein has man entered into adoption by God, yes, inheritance of the Grace, shoots on the Vine, members in the body of Jesus Christ. We also recognize a growth according to the Holy Scriptures—cleansed, healed, and made blessed through the bath of re-birth and renewing of the Holy Spirit. To this end means are necessary, public as well as private—public assemblages where the Word is brought for penance-calling, and private where such children often gather and reveal to each other, filially, one to the other. From this love grows and faith, and confidence is strengthened,

because such children are exposed to many temptations and when through filial revelation the craftiness of the devil is discovered, then one can talk openheartedly with the other so that the body of Christ is renewed, and because such children are still in flesh and blood, a Christian regulation is necessary as in the household of God, according to the Scripture, Matth. 18; and furthermore, because such children are bound through love to watch out for each other, we consider it necessary and decided that nobody in important affairs should do anything without brotherly advice, such as marry, or change his dwelling, buy land, or whatever important may occur. We also acknowledge a ban or separation of offending members, yet with a difference as above noted in Matth. 18. If a brother sins against you in small affairs and wishes to show submission, he may be addressed in filial love, not aggressively and not in childish talk. If, however, the accused brother or sister cannot understand it, let it be said to one or two and lastly to the congregation. If he is not agreeable, then consider him as a heathen and a publican. But as for such as let themselves be called brethren or sisters, according to 1 Cor. 5:11: if they, however fall into vice, there is no need of the above brotherly investigation, but they are to be given over to judgment, to which they already really have reverted. Mark the expressions of Paul: "We bid you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother who walketh disorderly 2 Thess. 3:6-14. Have nothing to do with him, so that he may become shame-red." "Now I have written to you that ye shall have nothing to do with him, not even to eat with them who are so idolatrous or have fallen into vice, to avoid them completely with hand and kiss, in eating and drinking," until the time of true repentance, sorrow and penance; "however, keep him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother," be help to him in need, in order to move him with love. If true repentance then follows, sorrow, penance and submission, so that they again in Jesus' blood have found forgiveness for their past sins, then also the members will again, through acquaintance with them, feel the unity of the Spirit; and they shall again be received openly to Communion, comforted and strengthened, so that they do not sink into excessive sadness. 2 Cor. 2:7. What, however, concerns other grounds, such as child baptism and unregenerate baptism, we leave to those who can satisfy themselves with them; where the teaching of the Lord Jesus and His apostles is silent, there we will also be silent. We also maintain that when believing persons, who have united themselves with God and their soul-bridegroom, are joined in matrimony, they are joined in eternity, in righteousness and uprightness,

in grace and compassion. Hosea 2. Should, however, a person come to new life or to reconciliation with Christ but be not yet baptized, and yet not contrary, he also has admission to marriage, for when souls are received by God we are also willing to receive them, even children of Brethren, when the elders are obedient and follow: because children stand under the elders, the elders under the congregation, the congregation under Christ, and everything is right and proper in its order. So the congregation can join their youth in marriage with advice, and they will not be sent out into the world; and it is our heart's wish and prayer to God the All-Highest that each first should have spiritual marriage with Jesus, the soul-bridegroom, and then the outward or body marriage. We also learn from the doctrine of the Lord Jesus that swearing of pledges is forbidden, therefore it shall be forbidden to us also. Matt. 5:34. Therefore it is also completely forbidden to bear the sword for revenge or defence. Verses 39, 40. We also learn from the doctrine of the Lord Jesus and His apostles that it is forbidden to any member or follower of Jesus Christ to occupy authoritative offices, therefore it is and shall be forbidden to us. We are not to withstand authority, but be obedient in all that is right and good, paying them tax and toll and protection-money, because Paul calls it God's servant (Rom. 13); so we see that God rules all nature, and has men who rule nature, and this is for the benefit of the children of God, else it would be still more difficult to live in this world; therefore Paul commands us to pray for them, that they may perform their duty loyally, so that the children of God under them may lead a quiet and blessed life. But we shall not use them for power; for the rest, we wish in God, the All-Highest, that He might build His congregation and plant and hold it in sound growth, that we also can be green sprouts on the vine and remain in all length of Eternity in Jesus Christ. Amen.

The above is and was signed in the name of the congregation by

Johannes Meÿer

Johannes Funk

Samuel Bentzner

Jacob Engel

Stofel Hollinger

Philip Stern

Johannes Greider

Benjamin Beÿer

*Translated from the German script by William M. Meikle of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. See Chapter II for information about this document.

Manual of Doctrine and Government

of the BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

1961

ARTICLE I THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

The Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God. This Word, given by divine inspiration, completes the revelation of God partially disclosed through nature, providence and the voice of conscience.¹ The Holy Scriptures are necessary for the understanding of God and His character, attributes and purposes for men.

The Bible as the written Word of God reaches its climax in revelation in the incarnation of Jesus Christ as the living Word of God.² Through Christ, the living Word, and the Bible, the written Word, are unfolded God's purpose, provision and plan for the salvation of men.

The Holy Scriptures as the revelation of God and His will constitute an authoritative standard of truth, a basis for faith and the supreme guide for life and conduct. The illumination of the Holy Spirit is necessary to the proper understanding of the Scriptures.³ The best source of interpretation of the Scripture is the Scriptures themselves.⁴

1. II Timothy 3:16; Psalm 19:14; Romans 2:14, 15. 2. John 1:1, 14. 3. John 6:45; I Corinthians 2:9, 10, 12. 4. Matthew 22:29, 31.

ARTICLE II GOD—THE HOLY TRINITY

There is but one living and true God, infinite, eternal, almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, righteous, loving and merciful. The Scriptures reveal that the Godhead is a Trinity of three eternal, divine persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.¹ These three are one.²

Intimations of the Trinity are found in the Old Testament, where God is revealed as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe,³ as providing the standard for man's holiness,⁴ and the sole object of his worship.⁵ The Spirit of God is revealed as associated in the work of creation,⁶ and as representing the God-head in personal relationships with men.⁷ The Son and His work as the world's Redeemer are prophetically revealed.⁸

In the New Testament the work of the three Persons of the Trinity and Their oneness in the Godhead are more fully brought into view.⁹ Here is revealed the active participation of the Son with the Father in the work of creation.¹⁰ Here the functions of the Trinity find their highest expression in relation to the plan of redemption. This plan was conceived through the love of God, the Father;¹¹ it was provided through the death of God, the Son;¹² and it becomes operative through the work of God, the Holy Spirit.¹³

Thus from eternity to eternity the three Persons of the Trinity through Their separate yet complementary functions accomplish the divine purposes of the triune Godhead.

1. Jno. 14:26; 1 Pet. 1:2. 2. Jno. 1:1, 2; 1 Jno. 5:7. 3. Gen. 1; Neh. 9:6. 4. Lev. 11:45; 20:26. 5. Ex. 20:3; Deut. 6:4, 5. 6. Gen. 1:2. 7. Gen. 6:3; Ex. 31:3. 8. Isa. 9:6, 7; Isa. 53. 9. Matt. 3:16, 17; II Cor. 13:14. 10. Jno. 1:3; Heb. 1. 11. Jno. 3:16. 12. I Cor. 15:3. 13. Jno. 14:16, 17; 16:8.

ARTICLE III SIN

The Holy Scriptures teach that man was created by God, in His own image and likeness. He was righteous and holy in character and enjoyed fellowship with God.

The Word also teaches that by sin, through the transgression of our first parents, man's original righteousness and communion with God were lost and the image of God marred and defaced. Thus the human family became dead in sin, unholy, and incapable of doing right according to the divine standard. By this original sin man by nature is inclined to evil, and actual transgressions of the law of God inevitably result.¹

Controlled by Satan through the inherited depravity of man's fallen nature, guilty by sins both of commission and omission, man by nature stands condemned under the dominion of spiritual, physical, and eternal death.² Moreover, man by his own effort cannot change his inherent preference for sin to love for God, nor even make an approach to such a change without the aid of the Holy Spirit.³

1. Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12. 2. Eph. 4:18; Rom. 6:23a; II Thess. 1:9. 3. Jno. 1:13; 6:44.

ARTICLE IV REDEMPTION

Scripture reveals the fact that the plan of redemption was included in the eternal counsel of God.¹ Its purpose is to deliver all men from the dominion of Satan and restore them to divine favor and fellowship with God.² To accomplish this, God, in infinite love and grace, gave His only begotten Son to be Mediator between God and men.³

When the fulness of time was come, Christ as the Son of God was born of the Virgin Mary. Thus, He took upon Himself the likeness of men, yet without sin.⁴

This divine-human Saviour, anointed by the Spirit, revealed God and taught by His life how man should live. He atoned for the sins of man by shedding His blood on Calvary's cross. His resurrection witnessed to His glorious triumph over death and Satan. He ascended to the Father by Whom the Holy Spirit was poured out upon His church.⁵ Christ now sits at the right hand of God to make intercession for us.⁶

1. Eph. 1:4; II Thess. 2:13. 2. II Pet. 3:9. 3. I Tim. 2:5, 6. 4. Phil. 2:7; Gal. 4:4. 5. Heb. 10:5, 7; 9:26; II Tim. 1:10. 6. Heb. 7:25; I Jno. 2:1.

ARTICLE V FREE WILL

God created man in His own image, a moral being with free will, obligated to exercise personal choice and responsibility to his Creator with respect to his conduct relative to right and wrong.¹

Through the fall of Adam, man became so depraved that he cannot prepare himself by his own works to merit or receive God's favor.² However, God through Jesus Christ, freely extends His grace by mercy to all men, enabling all who will to turn from sin to righteousness,³ thus preparing them to do works pleasing unto Him.⁴

The believer's relationship of life in Christ remains secure as he exercises his own voluntary will unto yieldedness and obedience to the known will of God.⁵ To willfully disregard God's will and commandments will result in his being eternally lost.⁶

1. Gen. 2:16, 17. 2. Eph. 2:8, 9. 3. Jno. 1:11, 12. 4. Phil. 2:13. 5. Rom. 12:1, 2; Rom. 6:16; II Pet. 2:20-22; Rev. 3:5.

ARTICLE VI JUSTIFICATION

Justification and condemnation are the only two possibilities existing in man's relationship to God. A man is either condemned to pay the penalty of his wickedness, or he is justified (acquitted) of all guilt and set free.

Universal guilt has been charged against every member of the human race.¹ God, the Judge, holds all men to be sinners and He must deal with mankind as such, unless some provision for his salvation is found.² Such provision has been made through the redemptive work of Christ on the cross of Calvary, where He became the substitute for all men. He assumes all man's guilt, bears all his penalty and he is adjudged free from all his sins.³ This is the glorious realization of all repentant sinners who appropriate the offer of redemptive love and atoning blood.

Judicially, justification accounts man as guiltless with regard to all his past sins⁴ and as the recipient of the imputed righteousness of Christ.⁵ Experientially, justification implies a spiritual birth and a new life.⁶ The Holy Spirit witnesses to the divine relationship⁷ and gives peace with God.⁸ The believer maintains this vital relationship with God, even unto eternal life, subject to his obedience to the revealed will of God.⁹

1. Rom. 5:12. 2. Rom. 3:23; 3:10. 3. II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:24. 4. Rom. 3:25. 5. II Cor. 5:21. 6. Jno. 3:3; II Cor. 5:17. 7. Rom. 8:16. 8. Rom. 5:1. 9. I Jno. 2:24, 25.

ARTICLE VII SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification throughout the Word of God is used with various meanings: to declare holy,¹ to set apart,² and to cleanse.³

As a Christian experience, sanctification embodies the setting apart of the believer in entire consecration⁴ and the cleansing of the believer's heart from carnality,⁵ accompanied by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁶

The sanctification of the believer is required by God,⁷ provided for by Christ in His atonement,⁸ and divinely wrought by the Holy Spirit.⁹

When the believer led by the Spirit becomes aware of an inner conflict of flesh and Spirit,¹⁰ loathes his condition, confesses his state and need; makes an unreserved consecration,¹¹ and exercises a living faith in the work of Christ on Calvary, he is definitely cleansed from the carnal mind. Thus the work of holiness which was begun in regeneration is perfected, and the believer is "sanctified wholly."¹²

This experience for believers is obtained instantaneously and subsequent to the new birth.¹³ The scriptural terms used to describe the cleansing of the believer's heart imply the same: purifying the heart;¹⁴ crucifixion of the old man;¹⁵ body of sin destroyed;¹⁶ circumcision of the heart;¹⁷ deliverance;¹⁸ creation.¹⁹

Even though it is possible for a sanctified believer to fall into sin,²⁰ Scriptures reveal that by giving heed to the Word,²¹ being devoted in prayer,²² and by rendering loving and obedient service to Christ²³ he is kept from willful transgression by the power of God.²⁴

Although sanctification perfects the motives and desires of the heart, the expression of these in terms of accomplishment is a progressive growth in grace until the close of this life.²⁵

1. Gen. 2:3; Ex. 29:43, 44. 2. Ex. 13:2; Jno. 17:19. 3. Ex. 19:10; Eph. 5:26, 27. 4. Rom. 12:1, 2; Jno. 17:17. 5. Acts 15:8, 9; Eph. 5:26. 6. Matt. 3:11; Acts 2:1-10. 7. Rom. 8:5-8; Heb. 12:14. 8. Heb. 10:10; Heb. 13:12. 9. Heb. 10:14, 15; Acts 15:8, 9. 10. Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:14-24. 11. Rom. 6:13-16; Rom. 12:1. 12. II Cor. 7:1; I Thess. 5:23. 13. Acts 8:14-17; Jas. 4:8. 14. Acts 15:8, 9. 15. Rom. 6:6. 16. Rom. 6:6. 17. Col. 2:11. 18. Rom. 7:24. 19. Psal. 51:10. 20. Jno. 15:6; II Pet. 2:20-22. 21. I Tim. 4:15, 16. 22. Heb. 4:15, 16. 23. Rom. 6:16. 24. Jude 20-24. 25. II Tim. 3:16, 17; II Pet. 3:18.

ARTICLE VIII THE CHURCH

The church is composed of all those of every nation who through saving faith in Christ have entered into spiritual union with Him.¹

This body of believers is characterized by having been cleansed from sin,² possessing the Holy Spirit,³ having the hope of glory,⁴ holding joint heirship with Christ⁵ and having fellowship with one another.⁶ Her eternal foundation is secured in the sonship,⁷ atonement,⁸ and resurrection of her living Head, the Christ.⁹

The church came into being through the operation of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.¹⁰ Through election of grace¹¹ she stands actively performing the functions of ambassador and evangel,¹² light of the world,¹³ and salt of the earth.¹⁴

Her perfection is attained through the mediums of her experiences, gifts, growth, and fruitage, doctrine, and ordinances.¹⁵ Ultimately as the bride of Christ she will become the glorious church triumphant.¹⁶

1. Acts 10:34, 35; Rom. 1:14-16. 2. Eph. 5:26. 3. Eph. 1:13. 4. Col. 1:27. 5. Rom. 8:17. 6. Acts 2:42. 7. Jno. 3:16. 8. Eph. 1:4. 9. Rom. 5:10. 10. Acts 2. 11. Eph. 2:8. 12. Matt. 28:19, 20; II Cor. 5:20. 13. Matt. 5:14; Phil. 2:15. 14. Matt. 5:13. 15. Eph. 4:11-16; I Cor. 11:2. 16. Rev. 19:7-9; Eph. 5:27.

ARTICLE IX WATER BAPTISM

Water baptism, an inclusion in the Great Commission,¹ is a rite of public profession, indicating that one has now come into the family of God the Father, into the mystical body of Christ, the Son, and into the communion of the Holy Spirit, which relationships are symbolized in the observance of this ordinance by trine immersion. Baptism is to be accompanied by a teaching ministry that guides the believer into the observance of all things, "whatsoever I have commanded you."²

The necessity of water baptism is established by the command and example of Jesus and the practice of the New Testament church.³ Those who have sincerely repented of sin, who have by the exercise of their own personal faith received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and have been "born again" by the Holy Spirit, are eligible for the observance of this ordinance.

Baptism has no saving merit in and of itself. It is an outward sign or symbol by which the believer testifies to the inner change of heart and redirection of life.⁴ Christian experience is illustrated by the figure of a spiritual baptism which suggests the death and burial of the old life and the resurrection of a new life in Christ. Baptism by immersion typifies and witnesses to such a burial and the coming forth to walk in newness of life.⁵

1. Matt 28:19. 2. Matt. 28:20; Jno. 15:12-17. 3. Matt. 3:13-17; Acts 2:38-41. 4. I Pet. 3:21. 5. Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12.

ARTICLE X THE LORD'S SUPPER

In connection with His last observance of the Passover feast Jesus instituted the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper, through the use of the broken bread and the cup. On this occasion He consecrated the bread, which represents His broken body,¹ and the fruit of the vine, which represents His shed blood,² as symbols of His redemptive sacrifice.

The Lord's Supper thus commemorates with renewed and tender meaning the sufferings and death of our crucified Lord;³ it beautifully portrays through the sharing of the sacred emblems the unity of the body of Christ;⁴ and it also points forward with hope and expectancy to the time when, according to His promise, Christ will again fellowship in person with His followers.⁵

This ordinance is observed by those, who having examined themselves as to their present fellowship with Him, esteem it a blessed privilege to partake of the sacred emblems in remembrance of their Lord.⁶

As often as the church observes the Lord's Supper, she witnesses to the world concerning the death of Christ, and the promise of His coming again.⁷

-
1. I Cor. 11:24; Jno. 6:48-51. 2. Lu. 22:20; I Cor. 11:25; Heb. 10:12. 3. Jno. 19; Phil. 2:7, 8. 4. Rom. 12:5; I Cor. 10:17. 5. Matt. 26:29. 6. Lu. 22:19; I Cor. 11:28. 7. 1 Cor. 11:26.

ARTICLE XI THE SCRIPTURAL HEAD COVERING

The teaching in I Corinthians 11:1-16 presents the use of the head covering as a scriptural principle with corresponding obligations for practice. This teaching finds its setting in a series of instructions dealing with conduct in worship, the observance of the Lord's Supper, and the use and abuse of spiritual gifts.

This passage teaches an external symbolism to indicate that men and women recognize and accept their divinely appointed relationship to Christ and to each other. This relationship is supported by other scriptures.¹ In recognizing this God-ordained relationship, the man when praying or prophesying should have his head uncovered and the woman should have her head covered.

The veil or covering is to be worn when praying or prophesying because it is a shame to omit it,² God's purpose in creation requires it,³ angels expect it,⁴ mutual interdependence calls for it,⁵ personal judgment supports it,⁶ nature teaches it,⁷ universal apostolic practice endorses it.⁸

The veiled or covered head of the woman also symbolizes the separation of the church unto Christ—a witness of her holiness, purity, and undivided love and devotion to Him.

-
1. Such as Gen. 2:18; Eph. 5:22-25. 2. I Cor. 11:6. 3. v. 7-9. 4. v. 10. 5. v. 11, 12. 6. v. 13. 7. v. 14, 15. 8. v. 16.

ARTICLE XII WASHING THE SAINTS' FEET

When concluding His earthly ministry, Christ gave an added revelation of Himself and His mission at which time He washed the disciples' feet.¹

In this practice Jesus taught the disciples to demonstrate love and humility in their daily walk and conduct. Several practical lessons are to be learned from the example He set before them:

Christ showed His ministering love in a practical way, for His love knew no bounds nor limitations. He also exemplified the grace of humility, which reveals that true greatness is in serving.

The Scripture teaches the literal observance of this practice,² which serves to remind us of the type of spiritual relationship that should be manifested among the followers of Christ.³

-
1. Jno. 13. 2. Jno. 13:14, 15; I Tim. 5:10. 3. Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1, 2.

ARTICLE XIII THE HOLY KISS

This Christian greeting is clearly identified in the New Testament, where it is designated as an “holy kiss”¹ and also as a “kiss of charity.”²

It constitutes an expression of the bond of affection that unites born-again believers—a symbol of divine love.

1. Rom. 16:16; I Cor. 16:20. 2. I Pet. 5:14.

ARTICLE XIV DIVINE HEALING

The fall of man has subjected our bodies to sickness and diseases, but God in His provision for the restoration of man has included the privilege of trusting Him for physical healing.

This privilege is made meaningful to us when considered in light of the following facts:

Healing is taught in both the Old and New Testaments;¹ many examples of practice are found in both Testaments;² healing is included in the plan and will of God;³ the teaching of healing and its practice is one of the assigned functions of the disciples and the church;⁴ healing is one of the special enabling gifts given to the church.⁵

The approach to God for healing is by the prayer of faith⁶ in association with faith inspiring acts such as the laying on of hands,⁷ and the anointing of the sick with oil.⁸

Since physical healing is not essential to the salvation of the soul, the provision for healing is one of a relative relationship to the atoning work of Christ rather than an absolute one.

1. Ex. 15:26; Jas. 5:13-16. 2. Num. 12:13-15; Matt. 8:1-17. 3. Jno. 9:3. 4. Matt. 10:8; Jas. 5:13-16. 5. I Cor. 12:9, 28. 6. Jas. 5:15. 7. Acts 28:8. 8. Jas. 5:13.

ARTICLE XV MARRIAGE

Marriage is ordained as an inseparable union between husband and wife and divinely instituted by God. So sacred are the purposes and obligations of this relation that Paul refers to it as a symbol of the relationship between Christ and His church.¹ This union of a man and woman in the marriage relation, whereby the two become one flesh,² becomes a bond that is severed only by the death of either partner.³

The Scripture condemns the marriage of Christians with unbelievers;⁴ but even though such be the case the marriage is binding.⁵ While the Scripture recognizes that separation may sometimes be permissible,⁶ such separation does not nullify the marriage vow, nor open the way for remarriage.⁷

The fundamental purposes of marriage are the establishment of the home, the enjoyment of family relations, and the propagation of the human race.⁸ The establishment of the Christian home and the rearing of children thus afford the highest and holiest of all divinely appointed human relationship.

1. Eph. 5:25. 2. Matt. 19:5. 3. Matt. 19:6; Rom. 7:2, 3. 4. II Cor. 6:14; I Cor. 7:39. 5. I Cor. 7:39. 6. Matt. 5:32; I Cor. 7:11. 7. I Cor. 7:11. 8. I Tim. 5:14.

ARTICLE XVI DEDICATION OF CHILDREN

“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord.”¹

It is reasonable that parents should dedicate a newly-born child to the Lord. Hannah dedicated her son to the Lord even before his birth² and then when Samuel came to a proper age, she confirmed this dedication in the temple, and God signally blessed the occasion.³ Parents brought their children to Jesus and He took them in His arms and blessed them.⁴

Since children in the state of innocence are included in the atonement,⁵ the dedication of children is not meant to provide their salvation and in no way deprives the child of his right as a free moral agent. Dedication is simply a factor contributing toward necessary influences in assisting the child to make a decision for Christ at the right and proper time.

A public dedication emphasizes the important and sacred responsibility that parents have toward their children.⁶ A dedication service serves to remind children in attendance of their own presentation unto the Lord.

1. Psa. 127:3. 2. I Sam. 1:11. 3. I Sam. 1:24-28; 2:1-10. 4. Mark 10:13, 14. 5. Lev. 4:2-35; Lu. 18:16. 6. Eph. 6:4.

ARTICLE XVII SEPARATION

The doctrine of separation has as its premise, a vital relationship with Christ.¹ The Christian is separated unto Christ and thus, for the glory of Christ, separated from the world. The purpose is twofold; man can only enjoy holiness as he is separated from uncleanness and man can only influence a lost world for good to the extent that he is removed from its ungodliness.²

Separation from the world is normal for the Christian because God's children enjoy a transferred citizenship, belonging to a kingdom different from this present evil world.³ Separation for the believer serves as a means of protection from the degenerating influences of the society in which he moves, and produces joy and contentment because he is separated for the glory of Christ.

When the truth and principle of this doctrine are applied in the Christian's life:⁴ his speech will be with grace;⁵ his leisure time will be Bible directed;⁶ his business relationships and practices will be governed by caution lest he sacrifice spiritual fervor and Christian influence;⁷ his attire will be in keeping with the teaching of the Scripture;⁸ his social life will be conducted in keeping with God's Word.⁹

The application of the doctrine of separation does not require nor justify reclusiveness in a Christian's life. Christ's example and prayer both enjoin upon Christians the duty of maintaining a relationship to the world that is helpful, morally uplifting, and Christ honoring.¹⁰

1. II Cor. 5:17. 2. I Thess. 4:1-12. 3. Phil. 3:20. 4. I Cor. 10:31. 5. Col. 4:6. 6. I Cor. 6:20. 7. Rom. 12:11; I Tim. 6:10. 8. I Pet. 3:3, 4; I Tim. 2:4-10. 9. II Cor. 6:14. 10. Jno. 17:14-18.

ARTICLE XVIII NON-RESISTANCE

Non-resistance is both a doctrine and a way of life. It involves not only the Christian's attitude toward war, but it also gives direction to many other areas of human relationships.

Jesus Christ is our example of the non-resistant way of life.¹ His kingdom, composed of all regenerated people, is a kingdom of love and is characterized by the spirit of meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, and forgiveness.² Hence, all acts of violence which seek the injury of others, whether committed by individuals or groups, and whether physically, socially or psychologically inflicted, are repudiated. Thus, participation in military service is inconsistent with the teaching of Scriptures concerning non-resistance. Jesus sets no limits to our forgiveness. He requires His followers to love their enemies, to bless those that curse them, to do good to those that hate them, and to pray for those that spitefully use and persecute them.³ Christians are forbidden to avenge themselves, but are commanded rather to overcome evil with good.⁴ This spirit of non-resistance calls for selflessness, sacrifice, and service to others, even at the cost of our lives, rather than to take the lives of our fellowmen.

Followers of Christ owe their first allegiance to God and His kingdom.⁵ They also owe to the state and society such loyalty and service as will enhance their testimony of peace and good will toward all men.⁶

1. I Pet. 2:21-23. 2. Col. 3:12, 13. 3. Matt. 5:44. 4. Rom. 12:19-21. 5. Acts 5:29. 6. Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:7, 8.

ARTICLE XIX CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Life is a stewardship. This is the teaching of Christ our Lord. Fundamentally, this teaching throughout the Scriptures is based on God's ownership both by creation and redemption. Thus stewardship becomes the Christian interpretation of life itself and is concerned with the Christian's use of all the resources committed to him, of possessions and personality.

The scriptural method for the gathering of money for support of the church and her program is by the means of tithes and offerings.¹ Special blessing is pronounced upon those who not only pay the tithe, but also give freewill offerings in addition to their tithe.² New Testament giving is to be regular and systematic as God has prospered.³

The Word forcefully declares the Christian's responsibility in stewardship of his talents,⁴ his time,⁵ his labor;⁶ in fact his total personality and being should be wholly given to the Lord and under His direction.⁷

1. Num. 18:21; Matt. 23:23. 2. Mal. 3:10. 3. I Cor. 16:2. 4. Matt. 25:14-30. 5. Jno. 9:4. 6. I Cor. 4:12. 7. Rom. 12:1; II Cor. 8:5; I Thess. 5:23.

ARTICLE XX SECOND COMING

The Second Coming of Christ to the earth is clearly taught in the Word of God.¹ However, Christ's Second Coming must be understood in terms of a two-fold advent, the Rapture and the Revelation.

The Rapture embodies His return for the Church in which the dead in Christ will be resurrected with spiritual bodies and the living saints will be changed (translated) and both shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.² The raptured saints share in the marriage Supper of the Lamb³ and forever remain with Him.⁴

The Revelation consists of the return of Christ with His saints to execute judgment on the ungodly.⁵

Following the Rapture the Great Tribulation shall transpire on the earth under the world dominion of the Antichrist⁶ who shall be destroyed⁷ preparatory to the one-thousand year reign of Christ on the earth called the Millennium.⁸

After the thousand years are expired Satan shall eventually be cast into the Lake of Fire, the wicked shall be judged at the Great White Throne, and the earth shall be purged by fire in preparation for a New Heaven and a New Earth.⁹

The coming of the Lord is imminent¹⁰ and will be sudden and glorious for all who are prepared and ready.¹¹

1. Jno. 14:1, 2; Acts 1:11; Heb. 9:28. 2. I Cor. 15:51-53; I Thess. 4:13-17. 3. Rev. 19:6-9. 4. I Thess. 4:17. 5. Jude 14, 15; II Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 19:11-21. 6. II Thess. 2:1-12; Rev. 13. 7. Rev. 19:19, 20. 8. Rev. 20:1-6; Micah 4:1-5. 9. Rev. 20:7-15; 11 Pet. 3:10-12. 10. Mark 13:32, 33. 11. I Cor. 15:52; Titus 2:13, 14.

ARTICLE XXI JUDGMENT

The Scriptures speak of several types of judgment convening at various times in God's great plan, of which the Judgment Seat of Christ¹ and the Great White Throne Judgment² are of primary importance and consequence.

The Scriptures teach that the believer is not saved because of his good works,³ but that he shall be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ for his good works if they were done for the glory of God.⁴ This will take place when Christ comes for His church.⁵

There will also be a judgment for the sinner after death at the consummation of human history, when the dead, both small and great, shall stand before God.⁶ God will be the Judge and the penalty will be based on records kept in the books.⁷ The punishment of those who die in their sins will be of unlimited duration.⁸

1. II Cor. 5:10. 2. Rev. 20:11-15. 3. Eph. 2:9. 4. I Cor. 3:14. 5. Rev. 22:12. 6. Rev. 20:11-15. 7. Rev. 20:12. 8. Mark 3:29; II Thess. 1:8, 9.

SECTION

THREE

DOCUMENTATION

PART I TABLES

THE HISTORICAL
FAMILY

TABLES

1-4

Table 1 THE CHRONOLOGY OF CONFESSIONS

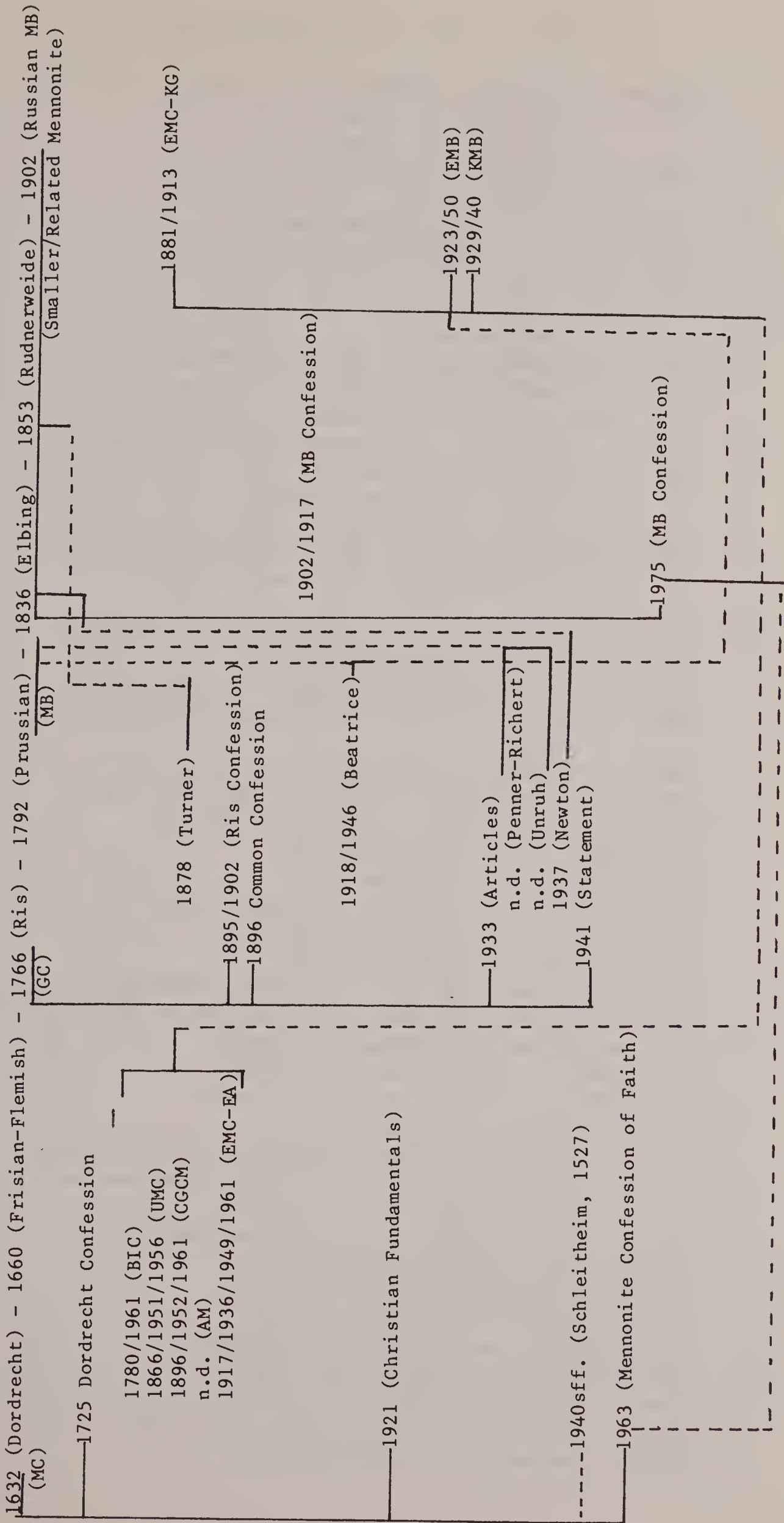


Table 2 THE LIST OF CONFESSIONS

1. European Mennonite Confessional Parents
 - 1527 - Schleithem Confession (Bruderlich Vereinigung) (Swiss)
 - 1545 - Riedemann's Confession of Faith (Rechenschaft) (Hutterian)
 - 1632 - Dordrecht Confession (Dutch)
 - 1660 - Frisian-Flemish Confession (Dutch)
 - 1766 - Ris Confession (Dutch)
 - 1792 - Confession of Faith of the Mennonites in Prussia (Dutch)
 - 1836 - Confession of Faith of the Mennonites in Prussia, Elbing Edition (Dutch)
 - 1853 - Rudnerweide Confession (Confession, or Short and Simple Statement of Faith of those who are Called the United, Flemish, Frisian and High German Anabaptist-Mennonite Church) (Dutch)
 - 1902 - Confession of Faith of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia (Dutch)
2. North American Mennonite Confessional Offspring
 - 1725 - Dordrecht Confession (MC)
 - 1780 - River Brethren Confession of Faith (BIC)
 - 1866 - Doctrine of Faith and Church Discipline (UMC)
 - 1870s- Riedemann's Confession of Faith (HB)
 - 1878 - Turner Church Confession of Faith (GC)
 - 1881/1913 - Confession of Faith (EMC-KG)
 - 1895/1902 - Ris Confession (GC)
 - 1896 - Common Confession (GC)
 - 1896/1952/1961 - Articles of Faith (CGCM)
 - 1902 - Confession of Faith (MB)
 - (n.d.) - Articles of Faith (AM)
 - 1917/1936/1949 - Articles of Faith (EMC-Egley Amish)
 - 1918/46 - Beatrice Church Confession of Faith (GC)
 - 1921 - Christian Fundamentals (MC)
 - 1929/1940 - Articles of Faith (KMB)
 - 1923/1950 - Articles of Faith (EMB)
 - 1933 - Articles of Faith (GC)
 - (n.d.) - Penner-Richert Confession of Faith (GC)
 - (n.d.) - Alexanderwohl Church/Unruh Confession of Faith (GC)
 - 1937 - Newton Church Confession of Faith (GC)
 - 1940s- Schleithem Confession (MC)
 - 1941 - Statement of Faith (GC)
 - 1949 - Articles of Faith (EMC-EA)
 - 1951 - Doctrines and Discipline (UMC)
 - 1961 - Statement of Doctrine (BIC)
 - 1961 - Articles of Faith (CGCM)
 - 1963 - Mennonite Confession of Faith (MC)
 - 1975 - Confession of Faith (MB)

Table 3 THE PERIODIZATION-OCCASION CHART

<u>Periods</u>	<u>Occasions</u>
	<u>Dordrecht/MC</u> <u>Ris/GC</u> <u>Russian/MB</u>
	(1) Unity-Separation Phase
European Origination:	union/Menn union/Menn separation/Menn
	(2) Accessibility-Identity Phase
American Transition:	identity/ society accessibility- ity/church accessibility- ity/church
	(3) Supplementary-Safeguarding Phase
Fundamentalist Tension:	supplement/ safeguarding statement/ identity agreement/ no confession
	(4) Identity-Updating Phase
Anabaptist Reorientation:	new confession/ update no confession new confession/ update

Table 4 THE OCCASIONS AND PURPOSES

	Church Discipline and Instruction	Unity of Believers	Defense of Faith	Authority of Scripture	Evangelism	Other
1725(MC) Dordrecht Confession	x	x				x
1780(BIC) River Brethren Confession	x					
1866(UMC) Doctrine of Faith & Church Discipline						
1878(GC) Turner Church Confession'						
1881(EMC-KG) Confession of Faith	x					
1895(GC) Ris Confession	x	x				
1896(GC) Common Confession	x		x			
1896(CGCM) Articles of Faith						
1902(MB) Confession of Faith	x			x	x	
n.d.(AM) Articles of Faith	x	x				
1917(EMC-EA) Articles of Faith	x	x				
1918(GC) Beatrice Church Confession	x	x				
1921(MC) Christian Fundamentals	x		x			
1923(EMB) Articles of Faith				x		
1929(KMB)Articles of Faith	x		x	x		
1933(GC) Articles of Faith	x					
n.d.(GC) Penner-Richert Confession	x	x				
n.d.(GC) Alexanderwohl Church,Unruh Conf.	x					
1937(GC) Newton Church Confession						
1940s(MC) Schleitheim Confession						
1941(GC) Statement of Faith			x	x		
1963(MC) Mennonite Con- fession of Faith	x	x	x	x	x	
1975(MB) Confession of Faith	x	x	x	x	x	
1949(EMC-EA) Articles of Faith	x			x		
1951(UMC) Doctrines & Discipline						
1961(BIC) Statement of Doctrine		x	x		x	
1961(CGCM) Articles of Faith	x					

STRUCTURAL FORM
AND ANALYSIS
OF CONFESSIONS

TABLES

5-8

Table 5 THE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

	1725 (MC)	1780 (BIC)	1866 (UMC)	1878 (GC)	1881 (EMC-KG)	1895 (GC)	1896 (GC)	1896 (CGCM)	1902 (MB)	n.d. (AM)	1917 (EMC-EA)	1918 (GC)	1921 (MC)	1923 (EMB)
Number of Articles	18	(13)	19	15	18	36	(8)	37	10	(4)	24	20	18	11
Words (approx)	5000	1700	2000	5300	7200	17,000	120	2300	8000	1000	2400	4100	1400	2400
Ref. to other Menn Conf.	yes					yes			yes			yes	yes	
Ref. to Menno Simons/Anab.			yes		yes	yes	yes		yes			yes		
Other References				Apoc 2	Apoc 7				Luther Calvin	Apoc (1)				yes
OT References	26	1	3	63	24	369	0	24	117	3	41	15	30	59
NT References	149	7	37	258	114	1640	13	111	759	3	276	109	184	244
Authorization (group/private)	G	G	G	G	P/G	G	G		G		G	G	G	G
Signature (group/single)	G (51)	G (8)			S	S	G	S	G (16)		G 6-1917 4-1936	S	G	
Original Language	D	G	G	G	G	D	E	E	G		E	G	E	G

Table 5 THE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS (page 2)

	1929 (KMB)	1933 (GC)	(n.d.) (GC)	(n.d.) (GC)	1937 (GC)	1940s (MC)	1941 (GC)	1949 (EMC--	1951 (UMC)	1961 (BIC)	1961 (CGCM)	1963 (MC)	1975 (MB)
Number of Articles	13	14	21	17	20	7	9	12	30	21(9)	26	20	16
Words (approx)	6500	4400	6200	1200	5500	3400	300	2700	3500	3800 (632)	4600	4600	3400
Ref. to other Menn Conf.					yes						yes (9)	yes	yes
Ref to Menno Simons/Anab.			yes (gen)		yes (gen)						yes (3)		yes
Other References											yes (3)		
OT References	45	47	11	5	8	0	0	43	22	30	20	15	19
NT References	172	306		36	101	28	0	259	176	235	122	159	132
Authorization (group/private)	G	G (unoff)		G		P	G		G	G	G	G	G
Signature (group/single)	G	G (5)	G (2)	G						G			0 (4)
Original Language	G	E	G	E	G	G	E	E	E	E	E	E	E

Table 6 THE SCRIPTURE FREQUENCY ANALYSIS IN THE CONFESSIONS OF FAITH INDIVIDUALLY

	Gen.	Ex.	Lev.	Num.	Deut.	Jogh.	Judg.	Ruth	1 Sam.	2 Sam.	1 Kgs.	2 Kgs.	1 Chron.	2 Chron.	Ezra	Neh.	Est.	Job
1725(MC) Dordrecht Confession	16			1	1													2
1780(BIC) River Brethren Confession																		
1866(UMC) Doctrine of Faith & Church Discipline	3																	
1878(GC) Turner Church Confession	5	3	4		6	1			2	1								3
1881(EMC-KG) Confession of Faith	6	1			3													1
1895(GC) Ris Confession	58	9	9	6	20	2	2		1	1	3		2	3	2	3		11
1896(GC) Common Confession																		
1896(GGCM) Articles of Faith	5	1	6		1											1		
1902(MB) Confession of Faith	15	5	2	2	6													2
n.d.(AM) Articles of Faith			1	1														
1917(EMC-EA) Articles of Faith	8	2		2	3					1				1		1		1
1918(GC) Beatrice Church Confession	7	2					1											2
1921(MC) Christian Fundamentals	12	2			1					1								

Table 6 THE SCRIPTURE FREQUENCY (page 4)

	Ps.	Prov.	Ecc.	S.of Sol.	Is.	Jer.	Lam.	Ezek.	Dan.	Hos.	Joel	Amos	Ob.	Jon	Mic.	Nah.	Hab.	Zeph.	Hag.	Zech.	Mal
1923(EMB) Articles of Faith	4	13			6	3			1			1									1
1929(KMB)Articles of Faith	1				1				2		2	2			2						
1933(GC) Articles of Faith	9	1			4	1		1							1	1					
n.d.(GC) Penner-Richert Confession	1				2				1			1			1					1	
n.d.(GC) Alexanderwohl Church,Unruh Conf.					1																
1937(GC) Newton Church Confession	1	1							1												
1940s(MC) Schleitheim Confession																					
1941(GC) Statement of Faith																					
1963(MC) Mennonite Confession of Faith	2								1			1									
1975(MB) Confession of Faith	3	1			4	1															1
1949(EMC-EA) Articles of Faith	9		1		10	3						1							1		3
1951(UMC) Doctrines & Discipline	3				3						1										3
1961(BIC) Statement of Doctrine)	3				2										1						1
1961(CGCM) Articles of Faith	5				3	1									1						

Table 6 THE SCRIPTURE FREQUENCY (page 5)

	Apoc.	Matt.	Mk.	Lk.	John	Acts	Rom.	1Cor.	2Cor.	Gal.	Eph.	Phil.	Col.	1Thes.	2Thes.	1Tim.	2Tim.	Tit.	Phil.	Heb
1725(MC) Dordrecht Confession		23	5	14	15	13	11	11	4	2	5		4	2	2	7	1	4		6
1780(BIC) River Brethren Confession		4					1	1	1						1					
1866(UMC) Doctrine of Faith & Church Discipline		4	1	2	5	3	5	5	1	2					1	3				1
1878(GC) Turner Church Confession	3	43	8	13	27	27	19	14	14	3	17	1	8	5	3	11		5		8
1881(EMC-KG) Confession of Faith	7	19	1	4	12	10	10	14	4	2	6	2	4	2	1	5	1	2		6
1895(GC) Ris Confession		197	32	99	159	108	184	92	69	39	73	38	29	25	2	11	17	28		119
1896(GC) Common Confession		3	1			1	2	1		1	2							1		
1896(GGCM) Articles of Faith		19	2	1	13	7	10	14	8	2	3		3	1	1	4	1	1		3
1902(MB) Confession of Faith		85	17	41	80	80	67	50	17	18	33	17	18	10	9	19	13	12		42
n.d.(AM) Articles of Faith	1	1					1													
1917(EMC-EA) Articles of Faith		28	8	13	26	35	43	15	11	7	11	4	2	8		3	2	6		142
1918(GC) Beatrice Church Confession		13		2	15	13	11	12	2	4	2	1	3	1	2	5		1		7
1921(MC) Christian Fundamentals		17		4	8	22	24	14	9	1	5	12	1	2	2	6	4	4		13

Table 6 THE SCRIPTURE FREQUENCY (page 6)

	Apoc.	Matt.	Mk.	Lk.	John	Acts	Rom.	1Cor.	2Cor.	Gal.	Eph.	Phil.	Col.	1Thes.	2Thes.	1Tim.	2Tim.	Tit.	Phil.	Heb.
1923(EMB) Articles of Faith		20	3	10	41	14	14	16	8	5	14	2	9	8	4	6	7	2		18
1929(KMB) Articles of Faith		37	3	7	24	12	13	9	7	3	15	3	2	2	2	4	2	1		8
1933(GC) Articles of Faith		29	3	9	36	23	46	31	12	14	21	3	3	3		7	2	3		16
n.d.(GC) Penner-Richert Confession		17	2	7	6	2	9	12	4	3	3		2	2	3	3	1	1		5
n.d.(GC) Alexanderwohl Church,Unruh Conf.		8			4	4	3	3	3	2	2									1
1937(GC) Newton Church Confession		15		1	14	5	12	10	3		3	1	3	1	1	5	4	1		7
1940s(MC) Schleitheim Confession		10		2	2		1	4	2			1				2		1		1
1941(GC) Statement of Faith																				
1963(MC) Mennonite Con- fession of Faith		19	3	8	13	11	14	19	9	6	11	2	3	1		9	2	1		7
1975(MB) Confession of Faith		20	1	4	10	13	14	7	7		12	3	1	6	2	6	1	4		8
1949(EMC-EA) Articles of Faith		21	7	9	27	41	27	21	7	9	21	3	5	5	2	5	5	4		12
1951(UMC) Doctrines & Discipline	1	16	3	6	20	12	17	12	8	3	6	1	3	7	2	2	2	3		14
1961(BIC) Statement of Doctrine		21	3	3	26	11	32	29	12	3	15	5	5	4	2	7	6	1		11
1961(CGCM) Articles of Faith		16	3	6	11	6	10	15	7	4	5		3	3	5	9	5	3		

Table 6 THE SCRIPTURE FREQUENCY (page 7)

	James	1 Peter	2 Peter	1 John	2 John	3 John	Jude	Rev.
1725(MC) Dordrecht Confession	2	6	2	4				4
1780(BIC) River Brethren Confession								
1866(UMC) Doctrine of Faith & Church Discipline		2		1				
1878(GC) Turner Church Confession	2	13	3	4				14
1881(EMC-KG) Confession of Faith		4	1	3			1	2
1895(GC) Ris Confession	29	47	36	53	3		12	71
1896(GC) Common Confession	1							
1896(CGCM) Articles of Faith	3	5	1	5	1			3
1902(MB) Confession of Faith	11	27	13	24	1	1	5	54
n.d.(AM) Articles of Faith	1							
1917(EMC-EA) Articles of Faith	4	7	5	15			1	8
1918(GC) Beatrice Church Confession	2	9	1	2				1
1921(MC) Christian Fundamentals	1	8	6	4			4	3
1923(EMB) Articles of Faith	4	7	5	8				19
1929(KMB) Articles of Faith	3	5	2	1				9
1933(GC) Articles of Faith	7	12	4	15				7
n.d.(GC) Penner-Richert Confession	2	6	3	4				3
n.d.(GC) Alexanderwohl Church, Unruh Conf.	1		2					4
1937(GC) Newton Church Confession	1	6	1	6				1
1940s(MC) Schleitheim Confession		1						1
1941(GC) Statement of Faith								
1963(MC) Mennonite Con- fession of Faith	5	8	1	3			1	3
1975(MB) Confession of Faith	1	5	1	2			1	3
1949(EMC-EA) Articles of Faith	3	10	3	5			2	10
1951(UMC) Doctrines & Discipline	3	8	6	8	2		2	10
1961(BIC) Statement of Doctrine	5	6	6	3			2	12
1961(CGCM) Articles of Faith	2	1	1	3				2

Table 7 The Cumulative Scripture Frequency Analysis from the Books of the Bible

OLD TESTAMENT			NEW TESTAMENT		
Books	Frequency	Priority	Books	Frequency	Priority
Genesis	251	1	Matthew	705	1
Exodus	44	5	Mark	110	16
Leviticus	33	9	Luke	269	8
Numbers	13	14	John	598	2
Deuteronomy	57	4	Acts	475	4
Joshua	4	21	Romans	590	3
Judges	3	22	1 Corinthians	416	5
Ruth	4	21	2 Corinthians	229	10
1 Samuel	9	16	Galatians	137	14
2 Samuel	5	19	Ephesians	292	7
1 Kings	4	21	Philippians	88	21
2 Kings	1	24	Colossians	112	15
1 Chronicles	3	22	1 Thessalonians	98	18
2 Chronicles	4	21	2 Thessalonians	49	23
Ezra	2	23	1 Timothy	139	13
Nehemiah	7	18	2 Timothy	76	22
Esther	0	25	Titus	89	20
Job	30	10	Philemon	0	27
Psalms	235	2	Hebrews	327	6
Proverbs	33	8	James	93	19
Ecclesiastes	12	15	1 Peter	203	11
Song	0	25	2 Peter	103	17
Isaiah	147	3	1 John	173	12
Jeremiah	39	6	2 John	7	25
Lamentations	9	23	3 John	1	26
Ezekiel	18	11	Jude	31	24
Daniel	35	7	Revelation	244	9
Hosea	5	20			
Joel	4	21			
Amos	9	16			
Obadiah	0	25			
Jonah	0	25			
Micah	16	12			
Nahum	0	25			
Habakkuk	2	23			
Zephaniah	0	25			
Haggai	1	24			
Zechariah	8	17			
Malachi	14	13			
Apocrypha	11	15			

Table 8 THE SCRIPTURE REFERENCES ANALYSIS

See Section Three: Documentation, IV. Scripture (Individual Confessions) for all the scripture references in each confession.

DOCTRINAL
FRAMEWORK

TABLES

9-13

Table 9 THE ARTICLE OUTLINE

1725 Dordrecht (MC) Confession	1780 River Br. (BIC) Conf.	1866 Doct/Faith (UMC) Ch.Disc.	1878 Turner (GC) Ch.Conf.	1881 Conf. (EMC-KG) of Faith	1895 Ris (GC) Confession	1896 Common (GC) Confess.
1.God & Creation	1.God	1.God and & Creation	1.God, Father	1.God, Creator	1.Knowledge of God from Nature	1.Word of God
2.Fall of Man	2.Jesus Christ	2.Fall of Man	2.Christ, Son	2.Son of God	2.Holy Scriptures	2.Jesus Christ
3.Restoration through Promise/Christ	3.Human Nature	3.Restoration through Promise/Christ	3.Holy Spirit	3.Holy Spirit	3.God's Being and Perfection	3.Conversion
4.Advent of Christ & Reason for Coming	4.Conversion	4.Holy Spirit	4.Church	4.Triune God	4.Holy Trinity	4.Baptism
5.Law of Christ (NT)	5.Baptism	5.Advent of Christ & Reason for Coming	5.Preacher/Office	5.Incarnation of Christ	5.Creation and Man	5.Integrity and Oaths
6.Repentance & Amendment	6.Communion	6.Holy Scripture	6.Deacons	6.Church/People of God	6.God as Pre-server & Ruler	6.Non-resis-tance & Revenge
7.Baptism (Holy)	7.Footwashing	7.Repentance & Amendment	7.Christian Baptism	7.Offices/Ordination	7.Man before Fall	7.Christian Life & Non-conformity
8.Church of Christ	8.Christian Life & Noncon-formity	8.Holy Baptism	8.Lord's Supper	8.Holy Baptism	8.Fall and Consequences	8.Church Discipline
9.Elections & Offices	9.Church Discipline	9.Church of Christ	9.Footwashing	9.Lord's Supper	9.Election	
10.Lord's Supper	10.Church Discipline	10.Elections & Offices	10.Marriage	10.Footwashing	10.Man's Restoration	33.Resurrection of Dead
11.Washing Feet	11.Marriage	11.Lord's Supper	11.Secular Authority	11.Marriage	11.Man's Freedom & Ability after Fall	34.Final Judgment
12.Matrimony	12.Integrity & Oaths	12.Footwashing	12.Oaths	12.Church Discipline	12.Christ & Incarnation	35.Eternal Life
13.Office of Civil Gov't	13.Nonresi- stance & Revenge	13.Matrimony	13.Vengeance	13.Government	13.Redemption	36.Eternal Punishment
14.Defense by Force	14.Christian & the State	14.Office of Civil Gov't	14.Ban	14.Oaths	14.Christ as Prophet	
15.Oaths		15.Defense by Force	15.Return of Christ, Resur- rection of Dead	15.Nonresistance	15.Christ as Priest	
16.Ban/ Excommunication		16.Oath	16.Last Judgment	16.Free Will	16.Christ as King	
17.Shunning		17.Ban/ Excommunication		17.Resurrection of Dead	17.Offer of Grace & Faith	
18.Resurrection of Dead & Last Judgment		18.Shunning		18.Last Judgment	18.Faith (Saving)	
		19.Resurrection of Dead/Last Judgment			19.Conversion & New Birth	
					20.Justification & Faith	

Table 9 THE ARTICLE OUTLINE (page 2)

1896/1952 Articles (CGCM) of Faith		1902 Conf. (MB) of Faith	(n.d.) Articles (AM) of Faith	1917 Articles/ (EMC-EA) Faith	1918 Beatrice (GC) Ch Conf.	1921 Christ. (MC) Fundmntls.	1923 Articles (EMB)of Faith
1.Bible, Word of God	21.Anointing Sick	1.God	1.Submission to State	1.Scriptures	1.Triune God	1.Word of God	1.Holy Script.
2.One God	22.Marriage	2.Sin and Redemption	2.Priority of Kingdom of God	2.True God	2.Holy Script.	2.Existence & Nature of God	2.God
3.Jesus Christ, Son of God	23.Nonconform- ity	3.Church	3.Prohibition of Civil Office	3.Fall/Man	3.Imago Dei & Fall	3.Creation	3.Jesus Christ
4.Holy Ghost	24.Covetous- ness	4.Baptism	4.Rejection of Oaths	4.Way of Sal- vation(Incar- nation	4.Redemption through Christ	4.Fall of man	4.Holy Spirit
5.Creation- General Account- ability	25.Worldliness	5.Lord's Supper		5.Holy Ghost	5.Grace & free Will	5.Jesus Christ	5.Trinity
6.Man	26.Pride	6.Matrimony		6.Free Salvation	6.Faith in Christ	6.Salvation	6.Satan
7.Miracles	27.Christian Living	7.Day of Rest		7.Repentance & Faith	7.New Birth/ Works	7.Holy Spirit	7.Angels
8.Conversion	28.Modest Apparel			8.Justification	8.Justification by Faith	8.Assurance	8.Anthropology /Man
9.Church- Nature	29.Nonresis- tance	8.Divine Law		9.Regeneration	9.Church	9.Church	9.Soteriology/ Salvation
10.Church- Organization	30.Oaths			10.Adoption	10.Ministry	10.Separation	10.Ecclesiology/ Church
11.Church Discipline	31.Separation/ Church & State	9.Gov't, Oaths, Non-resistance, Kingdom of God		11.Sanctifi- cation	11.Baptism	11.Discipline	11.Eschatology/ Last Things
12.Church's Mission	32.Lodges, Organizations	10.Second Coming, Resur- rection & Last Judgment		12.Divine Healing	12.Lord's Supper	12.Ordinances	
13.Ordinances	33.Life Insurance			13.Baptism of Holy Spirit	13.Footwashing	13.Restrictions	
14.Baptism	34.Second Coming			14.Church	14.Marriage	14.Apostacy	
15.Communion	35.Bodily Resurrection			15.Baptism	15.Government	15.Resurrection	
16.Feetwashing	36.Eternal Judgment			16.Lord's Supper	16.Nonresistnce	16.Coming/Christ	
17.Christian Woman	37.Eternal Life for Righteousness			17.Marriage	17.Oath	17.Intermediate State	
18.Hair				18.Divorce	18.Church Disc.	18.Final State	
19.Beards				19.Civil Gov't	19.Resurrect. of Dead		
20.Holy Kiss				20.Oaths	20.Final Jdgmt		
				21.Nonresistance			
				22.Lord's Day			
				23.Coming of Christ			
				24.Jdgmt Day			

Table 9 THE ARTICLE OUTLINE (page 3)

1929 Articles (KMB) of Faith	1933 Articles (GC) of Faith	(n.d) Penner-Richert (GC) Confession	(n.d) Alexandwhl (GC) Unruh Conf.	1937 Newton Ch. (GC) Confession	1940s Schleith. (MC) Confession	1941 Stmt. of (GC) Faith	1949 Article (EMC-EA) Faith
1. Bible	1. God	1. Scripture	1. Triune God- Creator, Redeemer	1. God, Creator	1. Baptism	1. God	1. Scripture
2. Triune God	2. God's Word	2. Trinity	2. Scripture	2. Holy Script.	2. Ban	2. Jesus Christ	2. God
3. Creation & Fall of Man	3. Creation	3. Creation, Pre- servation, Rule of Trinitarian God	3. Creation/Man	3. Imago Dei/Fall	3. Communion	3. Eternal Life	3. Jesus Christ
4. Holy Baptism	4. Fall & Degeneration	4. Sinfulness of Man & Redempt. thru Christ	4. Fall	4. Redemption/ Christ	4. Separation	4. Script./Word of God	4. Holy Spirit
5. Church	5. Redempt. & Regeneration	5. Free Will	5. Salvation/ Faith	5. Grace and Free Will	5. Shepherds	5. Salvation by Grace	5. Man
6. Lord's Supper	6. Church	6. Justification by Faith	6. Church	6. Faith/Christ	6. Sword	6. Discipleship & Nonresistance	6. Salvation
7. Feet Washing	7. Ordinances	7. New Birth	7. Baptism	7. New Birth/Wrks	7. Oath	7. Prayer	7. The Church
8. Matrimony	8. Family	8. Church	8. Communion	8. Justification/ Faith		8. Church	8. Lord's Day
9. Government	9. Government	9. Offices of Church	9. Marriage/ Family	9. Church		9. Brotherhood/ Fatherhood	9. Ordinances
10. Oaths	10. Oaths	10. Holy Baptism	10. Government	10. Ministry			10. Eschatology
11. Non-resis- tance	11. Noncon- formity	11. Lord's Supper	11. Oaths	11. Baptism			11. Divine Healing
12. Day of Rest	12. Non-resis- tance	12. Marriage	12. Non-con- formity	12. Lord's Supper			12. General Principles
13. Second Coming & Resur- rection of Dead	13. Death, Resurrection, Judgment	13. Office of Government	13. Non-resis- tance	13. Footwashing			
	14. Eternal Life	14. Oath	14. Eternal Death	14. Marriage			
		15. Love of Enemy	15. Resurrection of Body	15. Government			
		16. Church Discipl.	16. Final Jdgmt.	16. Nonresistance			
		17. Death/Status of Soul in Realm of Dead	17. Final State	17. Oath			
		18. Resurr. of Dead		18. Church Discip			
		19. Final Judgment		19. Resurrection of Dead			
		20. Eternal Death		20. Final Jdgmt.			
		21. Eternal Life					

Table 10 THE ARTICLE CONTENT

	1725 (MC)	1780 (BIC)	1866 (UMC)	1878 (GC)	1881 (EMC-KG)	1895 (GC)	1896 (GC)	1896 (CGCM)	1902 (MB)	n.d. (AM)	1917 (EMC-EA)	1918 (GC)	1921 (MC)	1923 (EMB)
God	1	(1)	1	1	1, 4	1, 3-6			2	1(1-3) 8	2	1	2, 3	2, 5, 7
Word of God			6			2	(1)	1, 5, 7	(Intro, 77)		1	2	1	1
Jesus Christ	4, 5 cf. 3	(2)	3, 5	2	2 cf. 4-5	12-16	(2)	3	1(4-5)	(3)	cf. 2, 4	1, 4	5 cf. 10	3
Holy Spirit			4	3	3 cf. 4			4	1(7)		5 cf. 2	1	7	4
Human Nature	2, 3 cf. 1	(3)	2			7-10		6	2(10- 14)		3, 6	2, 5 6	4, 6	8, 9, 6
Free Will					16	11			2(12)			5		
Conversion	6	(4)	7			17-20	(3)	8	2(15- 17)		7, 8, 9 10	7, 8 cf. 6	6 cf. 10	9
Church and Its Mission	8		9	4	6	23		9, 12 13	3(28- 35)	(3)	14	9	9	10
Church Offices	9		10	5, 6	7	24		10	3(36-41 4(46)			10	11	cf. 10
Baptism	7	(5)	8	7	8	25	(4)	14	4(47- 52)		15	11	12	cf. 10
Communion	10	(6)	11	8	9	26		15	5(53- 57)		16	12	12	cf. 10
Footwashing	11	(7)	12	9	10			16	5(58)			13	12	
Marriage	12	(11)	13	10	11	31		22	6(59- 61)		17-18	14	13	
Church Discipline	16, 17	(9, 10)	17, 18	15(14) (sic)	12	27	(8)	11	4(42- 45)			18	11 cf. 14	cf. 10
Christian Life & Nonconformity	16	(8)				21-22	(7)	17-21, 23-28 32-33	2(18- 27)		11, 13 cf. 12		8, 10 cf. 13 14	cf. 9
Divine Law									8(64)				cf. 13	
Integrity & Oaths	15	(12)	16	12	14	30	(5)	30	9(67)	(4)	20	17	13	
Nonresistance & Revenge	14	(13)	15	13	15	29	(6)	29	9(66)		21	16	cf. 13	
Christian & The State	13	(14)	14	11	13	28		31	9(65)	(1, 2, 3)	19	15	13	
Lord's Day									7(62- 63)		22			
Last Things	18		19	15	17-18	32-36		34-37	10(68- 76)		23-24	19-20	15-18 cf. 14.	11

Table 10 THE ARTICLE CONTENT (page 2)

	1929 (KMB)	1933 (GC)	(n.d.) (GC)	(n.d.) (GC)	1937 (GC)	1940s (MC)	1941 (GC)	1949 (EMC-- EA)	1951 (UMC)	1961 (BIC)	1961 (CGCM)	1963 (MC)	1975 (MB)
God	2	1,3	1,3	1	1		1	2	1	2	1	1,3	1
Word of God	1,(cf.)2 Frwd)		1	2	2		4	1	6	1(4)		2	2
Jesus Christ	2	1	1,4	1,5	4		2	3	4	4(2)		1,5 cf.3	1 cf.Pref. cf.4
Holy Spirit	2	1	cf.1	1	cf.1		cf.1	4	5	(3)		1,7	1
Human Nature	3	4 cf.5	4	3,4 5	3			5	2,3,7	3	2,3	4,6 cf.3	3
Free Will			5		5				8	5			3
Conversion	3	5	6,7		6,7 8		5 cf.8	6	9,10, 11,12, 13	6(5)	4	6	4
Church and Its Mission	5	6	8	6	9		8,9	7	18	8(9)	9	8,9	6,7
Church Offices	cf.5	cf.6	9		10	5			26		8,20	10 cf.14	6,8
Baptism	4	7	10	7	11	1		9	19	9(6)	5	8,11	9
Communion	6	7	11	8	12	3		9	21	10(6)	6	8,12	10
Footwashing	7				13			9	20	12(6)	7	8,13	cf.6
Marriage	8	8	12	9	14			12	22	15	12,13	8,15	9
Church	cf.5		16			2			14,15, 16,17		17,18	8 cf.16	6
Discipline													
Christian Life & Nonconformity	cf.5	11		12,13		4	6,7	6,11 12		7,17, 19	19,23, 24,25	7,16	5,6
Divine Law											11		
Integrity & Oaths	10	10	14	11	17	7		12	25		14	17	13
Nonresistance & Revenge	11	12	15	13	16	6	6	12	24	18(7)	15,16	18	15
Christian & The State	9	9	13	10	15			12	23	(7)	16	19	14
Lord's Day	12							8	27			8	12
Last Things	13	13-14	17-21	14-17	19-20		3	10	28,29 30	20,21 (8)	26	20	16

Table 11 THE ARTICLE FREQUENCY ANALYSIS
A Comparison of European and North American Mennonite
Confessions of Faith

<u>North American</u>		<u>European</u>	
1) Last Things	51	1) Christ and His Word	26
2) Christian Life and Nonconformity	50	2) God and His Attributes	23
3) Jesus Christ	45	3) Conversion	19
4) Human Nature	40	4) Return of Christ	19
5) Conversion	39	5) Church Discipline	17
6) God	36	6) Church Offices	15
7) Church and Its Mission	29	7) Fall and Redemption	14
8) Baptism/Christian Discipline	27	8) Baptism	13
9) Communion	26	9) Church/Communion/Oath/Free Will	11
10) Church Offices/Marriage/State/Nonresistance	25	10) Marriage	10
11) Holy Spirit	24	11) Government	9
12) Word of God/Oaths	23	12) Spirit/Footwashing/Revenge/Word of God	8
13) Footwashing	18	13) Separation and Sanctity	6
14) Free Will/Lord's Day	9		
15) Divine Law	3		

Table 12 ARTICLE FREQUENCY ANALYSIS
A Comparison of the Main North American Mennonite
Confessional Traditions

	MC (4)	GC (9)	MB (2)	Other (12)
God	5	14	2	14
Word of God	2	8	2	11
Christ	8	17	3	16
Spirit	3	7	3	11
Human Nature	8	14	2	16
Free Will	0	4	3	3
Conversion	4	15	2	18
Church	4	9	3	14
Offices	5	7	4	8
Baptism	5	8	2	12
Communion	5	7	2	12
Footwashing	4	3	2	10
Marriage	4	7	2	12
Discipline	7	6	2	14
Christian Life	8	9	3	28
Law	1	0	1	1
Oaths	4	8	2	10
Nonresistance	4	9	2	12
State	3	7	2	13
Lord's Day	1	0	2	4
Last Things	7	22	2	18

Table 13 THE COMMON CONFESSIONAL OUTLINE

- I. Triune God and Creation
 - 1. Perfection
 - 2. Creator
 - 3. Preserver
- II. Word of God and Revelation
 - 1. Word of God
 - 2. Revelation
 - 3. Scripture
- III. Jesus Christ and Redemption
 - 1. Attributes
 - 2. Redemption
 - 3. Incarnation
- IV. Holy Spirit and Transformation
- V. Human Nature and Salvation
 - 1. Sin
 - 2. Redemption
 - 3. Free Will
 - 4. Regeneration
- VI. Church of Christ and Mission
 - 1. Inner Nature of Church's Mission
 - 1.1 Marks
 - 1.2 Membership
 - 1.3 Offices
 - 1.4 Mission
 - 1.5 Ordinances
 - 1.6 Marriage
 - 1.7 Discipline
 - 2. Outer Function of Christian's Discipleship
 - 2.1 Nonconformity and Discipleship
 - 2.2 Integrity and Oaths
 - 2.3 Nonresistance and Revenge
 - 2.4 Christian and the State
 - 2.5 Lord's Day and Work
- VII. Eternal Hope and Resurrection
 - 1. Death
 - 2. Intermediate State
 - 3. Return of Christ
 - 4. Resurrection of Dead
 - 5. Last Judgment
 - 6. Final State

PART II

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PART II BIBLIOGRAPHY
(Works Consulted)

Location symbols following an entry in the bibliography indicate that the item described is to be found in the library named in the table below. Entries that do not have a location symbol are to be found in the Hiebert Library, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary/Fresno Pacific College, Fresno, California. These items will also be available in other Mennonite historical libraries throughout North America.

- BE Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, Newton, Kansas
G Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana
M Library, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana
P Hiebert Library, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary/Fresno Pacific College, Fresno, California

A. The Larger Mennonite Confessional Traditions

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PART III

APPENDICES

ADDITIONAL
CONFESSIONS

EINE KONFESSION ODER GLAUBENSBEKENNTNIS DER
TAUFGESINNTEN IN GRIECHENLAND,
welche die drei Christen von Thessalonich, die nach
Deutschland gekommen sind und all da bekannt haben den
Grund ihres Glaubens wie folgt, lehrten:
ca. 1540

I

Von Gott dem Vater glauben und bekennen wir, dass er sei der ewige Vater von aller Ewigkeit her; und von Seinem Sohn glauben und bekennen wir nach aller Propheten und Apostel Schriften zu sein empfangen durch das Wort des Vaters und von Maria zur Welt geboren. Wir verstehen, weil Maria von der Erde war, ist sie leider zur Erde worden, und bekennen hiermit Johannes, dass das Wort sei Fleisch geworden. Dieweil Sein Leib ist empfangen durch das Wort des Vaters, so ist er nicht wie andere Sünder zur Erde gekehrt, sondern ist aus der Erde auferstanden und gen Himmel gefahren, von dannen Er gekommen ist, und hat die Verwesung seines Fleisches nicht gesehen.

II

Von der Taufe glauben und bekennen wir, eine Taufe auf den Glauben und keine Kindertaufe, und verstehen, dass ein Täufling mit Seinen Füßen muss im Wasser stehen, gleich wie Christus im Jordan; also wird er getauft im Namen des Vaters und des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes.

III

Vom Nachtmahl des Herrn glauben und bekennen wir ein Nachtmahl des Herrn, gehalten zu werden mit gemeinem Brot und Wein zum Gedächtnis des bitteren Leidens und Sterbens Jesu Christi, unseres Herrn.

IV

Vom Fusswaschen glauben und bekennen wir eine Fusswaschung bei uns gebraucht zu werden für eine Ordnung des Herrn.

V

Vom Ehestand glauben und bekennen wir einen Ehestand von zwei gläubigen Personen und keine auswendige Trauung bei Strafe des Bannes; und der gestrafte Mensch mag nimmermehr zur Gemeinde kommen, es sei dann dass er das auswendige mitbringe oder verlasse.

VI

Vom Bann glauben und bekennen wir gehalten zu werden im Fall, so es sich begibt (oder gebührt), dass jemand sich verläuft in Ketzereien oder fleischlichen Werken. Der wird vor das Volk gestellt und sein Übertreten ihm vor Augen gestellt, und so er oder sie dann davon absteht, so bannt man sie nicht, aber man hält dieselben eine Zeit lang auf in den geistlichen Werken oder Handel und sieht auf die Früchte der Busse. Und so eine Zeit verlaufen ist, stellt man sie wiederum vor das Volk oder die Gemeinde, und so da[s]selbst jemand erfunden wird vom Kleinsten bis zum Grössten, der mit ihrer Buss nicht kann zufrieden sein, so muss derselbe Sünder noch eine Zeit lang aus dem geistlichen Handel bleiben, so lange bis alle Brüder und Schwestern mit ihm zufrieden sind. Als dann lässt man sie wiederum in allen Handel kommen. Wenn aber der Sünder nicht will abstehen, wenn man ihn vor die Gemeinde gestellt hat, so wird er abgeschnitten oder gesondert von der Gemeinde, und man meidst ihn in Handel und Wandel und isst und trinkt nicht mit ihm und empfängt ihn nicht in unser Häusern und grüsst ihn nicht auf der Strasse.

VII

Von der ehelichen Meidung glauben und bekennen wir ein eheliche Meidung auf solche Weise: so da zwei gläubige Personen im Ehestand sind, und das eine wird abfällig, und das abfällige begehrt bei dem gläubigen zu wohnen, gebieten wir demselbigen keine Meidung sondern achten(erlauben) dann dem gläubigen Mann oder Weib das bequemste (?) mit dem abgefallenen zu hausen und zur Busse zu vermahnen mit ihrem keuschen Wandel. Wenn es aber geschieht, dass das abgefallene so verkehrt lebt, dass das gläubige seinen Glauben bei dem ungläubigen nicht leben kann, so sehen wir das für gut an, dass das gläubige (Teil) sich von dem ungläubigen entziehe; und so das abgefallenen, welches verkehrt lebt, dass es nicht bei dem gläubigen wohnen will, so ist das gläubige nicht verbunden, in solcher Schuld zu folgen.

VIII

Vom Eidschwören glauben und bekennen wir, dass ein Christ keinen Eid schwören soll über Ja und Nein, ob er gleich die Wahrheit hat, sondern lieber sterben.

IX

Vom Schwertführen glauben und bekennen wir, dass ein Christ in keinerlei Weiss mit Waffen Gegenstand tue, auch kein Schwert führe. Wir bekennen Christum gestorben zu sein und begraben und am dritten Tage wieder auferstanden und gen Himmel gefahren uns wird am jüngsten Tage wieder kommen, Gericht zu halten über lebendige und tote.

X

Vom Auferstehen der Toten glauben und bekennen wir, dass alle Menschen werden auferstehen mit ihrem Leib und Seele; die Frommen zum ewigen Leben, die Gottlosen zum ewigen Tod.

XI

Vom Sterben der Kinder glauben und bekennen wir: die Kinder, die in ihrer Unwissenheit sterben, achten wir selig zu sein, besonders die der Gläubigen.

XII

Vom Handel und Wandel glauben und bekennen wir, dass keinem Christen zugelassen sei in einigem Handel seinen Nächsten zu betrügen oder zu beleidigen. Wir halten viel von Matth. xx, Kapitel 5 und 6, welches wir auch suchen zu beleben.

XIII

Von dem Freien Willen glauben und bekennen wir, dass Gott allen Menschen solche Gaben gibt in ihrem freien Willen, dass sie sich mögen kehren zum Guten oder zum Bösen.

Der eine von diesen Griechen hat in der Stadt Larische (Thessaly=Larissa) gewohnt und er hat gesagt, dass in derselben Stadt wohl 2000 Brüder wohnen, und da ist nicht ein Flecken in Grieschenland, der nicht Brüder darin hätte. Auch sagt er, dass die Gläubigen niemals so verfallen gewesen seien, dass nicht Brüder und Älteste gewesen wären, die

nicht allezeit in den Dienst bestätigt haben. Er sagt, dass sie noch Briefe haben, die die Aposteln mit ihren eigenen Händen geschrieben haben, und dass sie den Brief haben an die Korinther an 5 vom gemeldeten Buch haben und die Briefe an die Thessalonicher und die Offenbarung Johannis, und sagt, dass es ganz grosse Buchstaben seien, griechisch geschrieben, so gross als ein Glied von einem Finger geschrieben, und hinten an der Offenbarung Johannis haben sie zwei Regeln mehr als wir und stehen ein wenig unten an, und lauten auf folgende Weise: "Veflucht sei der Mensch, der sein Vertrauen setzt auf das ungesäuerte Brot" Wir haben nicht verstehen können in unseren Lande, was der Apostel mit diesen Worten meinet. Aber als ich hier bin durch das Land gekommen zu reisen, da befand ich, was der Apostel hiermit gemeint hat, denn ich habe ein Volk gefunden, dass seine Hoffnung gesetzt hat in ein fett ungesäuert Brot.

XIV

Von Patriarchen glauben und bekennen wir: Patriarchen, Bischöf und Diakonen mögen nichts ausrichten, ohne gesandt zu sein von der Gemeinde oder jemand von oben. Von Kaufen und Handel: die Patriarchen, Bischöfe und Prediger mögen keinen Kaufhandel treiben, denn allein wirken mit ihren Händen, und so dieselben zu kurz kommen so erfüllens die Brüder. Von der Obrigkeit bekennen wir, dass die Christen keine Obrigkeit bekennen unter ihnen zu sein, denn Christus ist ihre Obrigkeit und König.

Soviel der drei Griechen oder Christen von Thessalonich ihr eigens Bekenntnis.

Dieser Brief ist aufgesetzt worden im Jahr 1627 oder um dieselbe Zeit, und wiederum abgeschrieben worden im Jahr 1743, den 24. April, von Jakob Schanz; und im Jahre 1805, den 25. Oktober, von Abraham Stauffer; und am 22. August 1814 von Johannes Bär; und im Dezembe, 1829 von Johannes Konrad; und im April 1905 von Otto Lichti, Bloomfield, New Jersey.

PS. Being very busy I had Bro. Lichti to copy it for me. N. B. Grubb (1920 or so?).

Glaubensbekenntniß,
der
Neuen Deutschen Baptisten
Gemeinde

1880

Einleitung

zu nachfolgendem Glaubensbekenntniß

der

Neuen Deutschen Baptisten-Gemeinde

in Nordamerika,

auch Neutäufer genannt.

Der Name Neutäufer wurde unserer Gemeinde von der sogenannten Staatskirche, in der Schweiz und in Deutschland beigelegt, weil sie keine Kinder, sondern nur Erwachsene, welche sie nach dem Befehle unseres Heilandes zuerst lehrten (Matth. 28, 19) und dann auf ihren Glauben taufte (Mark. 16, 16). Diese, obwohl die apostolische Lehre, war den Menschen, welche an die Kindertaufe gewohnt waren, etwas Neues. Ein zweiter Umstand, unserer Gemeinde diesen Namen beizulegen, war dieser: Es war eine andere Gemeinde, die auch keine Kinder taufte, welche unter dem Namen Wiedertäufer, oder auch Alttäufer, bekannt waren, aber doch nicht in allen Punkten mit unserer Gemeinde übereinstimmten. Um daher diese Beiden von einander zu unterscheiden, wurde unsere Gemeinde kurzweg mit dem Namen Neutäufer belegt.

Sieben Glieder dieser Gemeinde sind im Jahre 1846 von der Schweiz nach Amerika ausgewandert, und hatten sich im Staate Ohio niedergelassen. Nun gegenwärtig, am Ende des Jahres 1877, beträgt die Gliederzahl neunundachtzig, und zweiundzwanzig sind schon im Herrn entschlafen (oder, gestorben).

Dieses Glaubensbekenntniß, in Artikeln zusammengestellt, und mit der heiligen Schrift bewiesen, übergeben wir allen heilsuchenden Seelen, um es unparteiisch zu prüfen und mit der heiligen Schrift zu vergleichen, und Gott zu bitten um Licht; daß eine jede Seele in dieser Zeit des Abfalls und geistlichen Verwirrung für sich selbst urtheilen könne, ob darin der richtige Weg gezeigt ist, wodurch ein jeder Mensch zum wahren, lebendigen Glauben an Jesum Christum kommen, und durch den Glauben das Zeugniß des heiligen Geistes erlangen kann, welcher Geist uns zu Kindern Gottes und Miterben Jesu Christi macht (Röm. 8, 16. 17); Diejenigen, welche zu diesem Glauben gekommen sind, in demselben zu stärken und befestigen, damit sie sich nicht von allerlei Wind der Lehre hin und her treiben und wankend machen lassen, sondern aushalten und beharren bis an's Ende, damit sie die Krone des Lebens empfangen.

Glaubensbekenntniß.

Artikel 1.

Die Dreieinigkeit Gottes und eine sichtbare Kirche Christi, oder Gemeinde Gottes auf Erden.

Wir glauben und bekennen, einen Einigen allmächtigen Gott und Vater, den Schöpfer Himmels und der Erde und Alles, was darin und darauf ist, und an Jesum Christum, seinen eingeliebten Sohn; auch an Einen heiligen Geist, welcher Eins ist mit dem Vater und mit dem Sohn (1 Joh. 5, 7); sowie an Eine heilige Gemeinde Gottes, bestehend aus Menschen, die durch die Kraft des Wortes Gottes gereinigt und wiedergeboren sind (Eph. 5, 26), erfüllet mit dem heiligen Geist und getrieben durch denselben; das sind Kinder Gottes (Röm. 8, 14). Daß es solche gab, sowohl im Alten wie im Neuen Bunde, beweist der Apostel (2 Pet. 1, 21) und die heilige Schrift durchweg. Aus solchen Menschen hat sich Gott eine Gemeinde erhalten, vom Anfang der Welt, und wird sie erhalten bis an's Ende, wenn auch zuweilen in einer geringen Zahl, wie wir sehen können bei der Sündfluth. Auch glauben wir an eine Auferstehung der Todten und an ein zukünftiges Gericht, nach welchem Gericht die Gerechten zur ewigen Seligkeit eingehen, die Gottlosen aber zur ewigen Verdammniß.

Artikel 2.

Von des Menschen Zustand vor und nach dem Sündenfalle.

Wir glauben und bekennen, daß Gott die Menschen gut und vollkommen erschaffen hat: ohne Sünde, göttlicher Natur theilhaftig, so daß ihnen nichts gemangelt hat im Paradies, was zu ihrem Glück und Seligkeit dienlich war. Aber durch die Uebertretung des Gebotes Gottes sind sie der göttlichen Natur verlustig geworden, Furcht ist bei ihnen eingekehrt, das Paradies mußten sie verlassen und hinaus auf den Acker, der um ihrer Sünde willen auch verflucht war, Dornen und Disteln zu tragen. Im Schweiß ihres Angesichtes mußten sie nun ihr Brod essen, mit Kummer sich nähren; Schmerzen und Noth waren nun ihr Theil. Damit sie in ihrer hoffnungs- und trostlosen Lage nicht verzweifeln mußten, gab ihnen Gott nach Seiner erbarmenden Liebe einen Trost, nämlich: die Verheißung des Schlangenzertreters, oder Erlösers, den Er senden werde zur

bestimmten Zeit. Diese Verheißung Gottes nahmen sie im Glauben auf, wie wir (1 Mose 4, 1) lesen können, daß sie das Wort Gottes im Glauben aufgenommen hatten, indem Eva schon bei der Geburt Kains glaubte und daher sagte: Ich habe den Mann, den Herrn. Durch diesen Glauben wurden sie wieder aufgerichtet und erneuert und zu Kindern Gottes gemacht. Daß hier nichts von der Buße gesagt ist, wie wir später immer finden in den Propheten, wird doch wohl Niemand zweifeln, daß Adam und Eva, nachdem sie aus dem Paradies vertrieben, und nun die Folgen ihrer Uebertretung empfinden mußten, es aufrichtig und schmerzlich werden bereuet haben. Somit war es auch nicht nothwendig, Buße anzukündigen, weil sie schon vorhanden war. Alle nun, von Adam an im Alten Bunde, bis auf Christum, die diesem Verheißungsworte glaubten, daß Gott durch Christum eine ewige Erlösung dathun werde, erhielten durch diesen Glauben Kraft, durch den Geist Gottes in einem göttlichen Leben zu wandeln, wie wir sehen können von Abel (Ebr. 11, 4) und von Henoch (1 Mose 5, 22—24), und Allen, von welchen wir im ganzen elften Kapitel in Ebr. lesen können. Daß aber nicht alle Nachkommen von Adam diesen Glauben angenommen haben und dadurch erneuert wurden, zeigt uns Kain klar und deutlich, der im Gegensatz zu Abel und den andern Gläubigen, nach seines Fleisches Willen lebte und zum Todtschläger wurde (1 Mose 4, 8). Von da an tritt der Unterschied deutlich an den Tag, zwischen den Gläubigen, oder Kindern Gottes, und den Menschen. Kain, welcher der Vater, oder Fortpflanzer, der Menschen war, denn also werden sie genannt in der heiligen Schrift (1 Mose 6, 2—4), weil sie nicht wie die Kinder Gottes durch den Glauben erneuert, sondern nur vom Fleisch geboren und darum nur Fleischesfrüchte bringen konnten (Röm. 8, 5. 6. 7). Kain wurde ausgetrieben, mußte unstät und flüchtig sein, ja abgesondert von den Kindern Gottes (1 Mose 4, 14). Die andern Nachkommen Adams wurden Kinder Gottes genannt, und als schon zur Zeit Enos vom Namen des Herrn gepredigt, die Gemeinde Gottes erhalten wurde bis zur Zeit Noahs. Da die Kinder Gottes wieder anfangen, sich mit den Töchtern der Menschen zu vermischen, wodurch sie zum Abfall von Gott gebracht, und weil sie sich vom Geist Gottes nicht mehr strafen wollten lassen, nahm die Sünde immer mehr überhand, bis die Zahl der Kinder Gottes nur noch acht Seelen zählte. Die übrigen Menschen wurden um ihrer Sün-

de willen durch die Sündfluth vertilget. Noahs Familie, wenn auch klein an der Zahl, war unstreitig die Gemeinde Gottes. Sie stand unter Seiner unmittelbaren Leitung, war gehorsam seinem Worte, trotz aller Verachtung und Spott der Menschen: durch die Arche, welche sie im Glauben an Gottes Wort zurichteten (Ebr. 11, 7) sind sie erhalten worden. Von dieser Zeit bis auf Christum finden wir sehr viele wahrhafte Glaubensmänner, wie Abraham, Isaak, Jakob, Moses, die Propheten Samuel und David. Siehe das ganze elfte Kapitel Ebr., in welchem wir Zeugniß haben durch die Apostel selbst, daß sie den heiligen Geist hatten (Apst. 28, 25; Luk. 2, 25—27; 2 Pet. 1, 21). Hatten sie den heiligen Geist, so waren sie Gottes Kinder (Röm. 8, 14) nicht aus Verdienst der Werke, sondern durch den Glauben an den zukünftigen Erlöser (Röm. 4, 3. 9).

Hier müssen wir noch einen Gegenstand berühren, indem von Einigen in unserer Zeit behauptet wird, es haben keine Sünden vergeben werden können im Alten Bunde, und habe keine Gemeinde Gottes bestanden, weil das Opfer für die Sünde noch nicht vollbracht war; auch weil zu den Alten gesagt war: Auge um Auge, Zahn um Zahn, und das Volk Gottes, die Kinder Israel, vornean standen im Blutvergießen, daher im Widerspruch mit der Friedensbotschaft unseres Heilandes. Auch wird im allgemeinen Sinn angenommen, daß das Wort, sowie der Geist Gottes nie, zu keiner Zeit, sich widersprechen, so könnte man wohl zu dem Schluß kommen, es habe damals keine Kinder Gottes gegeben, die mit dem heil. Geist erfüllet waren; indem die Eigenschaften des heiligen Geistes im Neuen Testamente ganz anderer Art sind: anstatt zu tödten, sich tödten zu lassen. Betrachten wir aber die Sache etwas näher, so finden wir keinen Widerspruch, sondern ein zusammenhängendes Ganze, völlig im Einklang mit dem Rath und Willen Gottes, von Grundlegung der Welt bis an's Ende. Wenn wir zurückgehen zur Schöpfung und legen uns die Frage vor: Hatte der allmächtige und allweise Gott nicht ein völliges Recht, Gebote und Gesetze zu geben, wie Er es für gut fand, als der Schöpfer aller Dinge? dann werden wir sagen müssen: Ja. Nun hat Gott nach der Sündfluth zu Noah gesagt: Wer Menschen Blut vergießt, des Blut soll wieder durch Menschen vergossen werden (1 Mose. 9, 6). Dieses wurde durch Moses den Kindern Israels wieder befohlen (2 Mose 21, 12). Ebenso hat der Herr den Kindern Israels ge-

boten, die kananitischen Völker auszurotten. Darum war es keine Sünde im Alten Bunde, Blut zu vergießen, wo Gott es befohlen hatte, denn wo keine Uebertretung ist, da ist auch keine Sünde.

Daß der Rachegeist im Alten Testamente sich durchweg kund gibt, darf uns nicht wundern. Die Rache aber wurde von den Gottesfürchtigen nur gegen die Schuldigen und Uebertreter geübt (1 Sam. 15, 2. 3. 33; 2 Sam. 4, 8—12; 1 Kön. 2, 5. 6). Saul wurde von Gott verworfen, weil er nicht Alles verbannte, selbst der unschuldigen Thiere sollte er nicht verschonen. Ja, der sonst so friedliche Samuel tödtete selbst mit eigener Hand den Agag, um den Befehl Gottes auszurichten. Der Zustand im Alten Bunde war gleichsam einem Lande, über welches das Kriegsgesetz erklärt ist, und oft so strenge in der Bestrafung, und manchmal in direktem Widerspruch mit dem Civil-Gesetz. Durch die Sünde und Uebertretung hat der Teufel, der Fürst der Finsterniß, ein Recht an die Menschen und eine Macht über dieselben erlangt! Dieser Feind im Lande suchte die Menschen (oder seine Unterthanen) in beständiger Rebellion gegen Gott, ihren rechtmäßigen König zu erhalten und Seinen Gesetzen zu widerstreben. Darum müssen wir uns nicht wundern, wenn es die Menschen so weit mit der Uebertretung trieben, daß Gott ohne Gnade ganze Völker vertilgte, wie wir bei der Sündfluth, sowie an Sodoma und Gomorra, und auch den Kananitern sehen. Dieser Zustand dauerte fort, bis der Friedensfürst kam und den Anforderungen des Gesetzes genügte, die Schuld bezahlte, den Fürsten der Finsterniß überwand, den Weg in's Paradies eröffnete. Da Er nun auf beiden Seiten als Mittler, sowohl der Gerechtigkeit Gottes durch Erfüllung des Gesetzes genügte, als auch die Schuld der Menschen durch sein Blut bezahlte, und somit dem Gesetze ein Ende machte (Röm. 10, 4; Matth. 5, 17), hat Er nun den Frieden hergestellt, und besitzt als Sieger alle Macht im Himmel und auf Erden (Matth. 28, 18). Indem Er nun seine Friedensbotschaft in aller Welt verkündigen ließ, ist es ganz natürlich, daß die Strenge des Gesetzes aufhören mußte. Da nun ein ganz anderer Zustand eintrat, so gab er auch diesem Zustande gemäß neue Gesetze, d. h. andere Bestimmungen; aber weil die Bestimmungen des Alten Testaments nicht gebrochen, noch aufgelöst wurden, sondern erfüllt (Matth. 5, 17), so ist nichts Widersprechendes zwischen dem Alten und dem Neuen, denn das Alte war jenen Zu-

ständen angemessen, wie das Neue den neuen Zuständen. Es ist daher die Uebertretung der Gebote Gottes, welche die ersten Eltern aus dem Paradies vertrieben, die gleiche Sünde im Alten wie im Neuen Bunde. Sie scheidet Gott und die Menschen von einander. Wie im Alten Bunde jede Uebertretung, auf welche keine Todesstrafe gelegt war, durch Opfer mußte versöhnt werden, die sie im Glauben brachten, so können auch im Neuen Bunde keine Sünden anders versöhnt werden, als durch das Opfer Jesu Christi, welches im Glauben ergriffen werden muß. Ohne Glauben kann der Mensch nicht zum Gnadenthron gelangen. Somit können wir sehen, daß der alttestamentliche Gottesdienst in völligem Einklang mit dem neutestamentlichen steht.

Wir haben diesem Artikel mehr Raum geschenkt, dieweil von einer Gemeinde, die vorgibt, die einzige wahre Gemeinde Gottes zu sein, behauptet wird: es habe keine Gemeinde Gottes gegeben im Alten Bunde. Dieses zur Erleuchtung, damit solche Seelen, welche nicht genugsam mit der heiligen Schrift bekannt sind, nicht irre geleitet werden.

Artikel 3.

Von der wahren Buße.

Als nun die von Gott bestimmte Zeit kam, daß Er die Verheißung erfüllte, die Er schon Adam gegeben und Abraham auf's Neue bestätigte (1 Mose 12, 3 u. 22, 18), an welche auch alle wahren Gläubigen im Alten Bunde glaubten und darauf warteten (Luk. 2, 25), nämlich den Trost Israels, Jesum Christum, den Erlöser. Aber die Menschen waren durch die Sünde so verdorben und in eine solche Finsterniß eingehüllt, daß sie nicht würdig waren das Heil in Christo Jesu, oder das Licht, welches er brachte, aufzunehmen (Joh. 1, 4—10). Damit aber Gott um der Sünde und Verderbtheit willen die Menschen nicht mit dem Bann schlagen mußte, sandte Er Elias, das ist Johannes den Täufer (Malach. 4, 5. 6; Matth. 11, 10—14 u. 17, 12. 13), um dem Herrn einen Weg zu bereiten, nämlich, ihre Herzen durch Buße zugänglich und empfänglich zu machen für den Heiland. Diese ihm von Gott bestimmte Aufgabe hat Johannes getreulich erfüllt, indem er rechtschaffene Früchte der Buße verlangte und die Bußfertigen zu Christo hinwies (Matth. 3, 3—12). Johannes hatte nun seine Bestimmung erfüllet und dem Herrn

den Weg bereitet, daß Er selbst Sein Werk anfangen und Sein Licht leuchten lassen konnte. Als nun auch der Heiland Sein Werk ausgerichtet und vollbracht hatte auf Erden, nämlich die Erlösung durch Sein Blut, und ehe Er von Seinen Jüngern schied, hat Er den Befehl, welchen Johannes empfing (Luk. 3, 2—10) an Seine Jünger übertragen (Luk. 24, 47—49). Diesem Befehle kamen die Apostel getreulich nach (Apsl. 2, 38. 39). Dieser Befehl gilt auch heute noch, Buße zu predigen, weil auf keine andere Weise dem Herrn ein Weg kann bereitet werden in den Herzen der Menschen. Weil aber viel von Buße gepredigt wird heutzutage, und Viele von Denen, welche Buße predigen, selbst nicht verstehen, was wahre Buße ist, so ist die Frage: Was ist denn wahre Buße? In kurzen Worten ausgedrückt heißt es: Wendet euren Sinn, traget Reu' und Leid über eure Sünden. Wie kann man aber erkennen, wenn ein Mensch seinen Sinn geändert hat? Kann man das als ein wahres Zeichen der Buße annehmen, wenn ein Mensch in die Versammlung geht, die Predigt anhört traurig wird, aufsteht und sich als Sünder bekennt, und mit den von der Gemeinde aufgestellten Regeln und Satzungen zufrieden ist; wie es heutzutage oft vorkommt, daß dieses als Buße angenommen wird und Solche entweder durch oder auch ohne Taufe aufgenommen werden? Wir sagen: Nein. Oder ist es als zuverlässig anzunehmen, wenn ein Mensch sehr traurig ist und viele Thränen weint, oder auch ein Bekenntniß seiner Sünden ablegt, was auch als eine Frucht der Buße kann angesehen werden? Auch dieses kann noch täuschen, denn es ist möglich, daß ein Mensch kann einen Theil seiner Sünden bekennen und andere noch verschweigen, oder er kann auch aufrichtig alle Sünden bekennen und Leid darüber tragen, kann aber doch noch in einem geheimen Hochmuth stecken, dessen er sich selbst noch nicht bewußt ist, welches noch eine gefährliche Klippe ist, weil nur ein wahrhaft gedemüthigtes Herz Ruhe findet für die Seele (Matth. 11, 29). Die Kennzeichen eines solchen noch nicht gedemüthigten Herzens sind die: daß solche Menschen bei einer genauen und durchgreifenden Prüfung innerlich gereizt und sich beleidigt fühlen, wenn man nicht unbedingt glauben kann, daß Alles ist, wie es sein sollte, und obwohl der alte Adam, der noch nicht todt ist, es zu verbergen sucht, so kennt doch Gott, der Herzen und Nieren prüft, einen solchen Zustand und wird es Denen, die Er als Wächter bestellt hat, auch offenbaren, wenn es ihnen wahrhaft

um das Heil der Seelen zu thun ist. Ein wahrhaft bußfertiger Mensch, der durch die Kraft des Wortes Gottes, welches schärfer ist, denn ein zweischneidig Schwert, ganz zernichtet, durch Buße der Sünde abgestorben und gedemüthigt, der ist so zusammengebrochen, daß man ihn untersuchen und prüfen kann, wie man will, er wird nicht beleidigt, sondern ein solch geistlich Armer, der von Allem entblößt, und nichts Gutes mehr an sich findet, verlangt nur nach Gnade und Erbarmen. Er erkennt, daß nur solches ihn retten kann. Sobald nun durch die Kraft des Evangeliums alles Sündliche gerichtet und erkannt ist, und ein Verlangen in der Seele nach Trost und Friede, so wird auch durch das Evangelium in einem solchen dunkeln Herzen das Licht des Glaubens angezündet, daß dadurch das Blut Christi erfaßt werden kann, nämlich: die Vergebung der Sünden. Denn der Glaube kommt aus der Predigt. Ohne daß der Sünder glauben kann, daß das Blut Christi frei macht von Sünden, kann er auch nicht Vergebung der Sünden erlangen. Somit ist ein gewisser Grad des Glaubens nothwendig, um Vergebung zu erlangen. Dieses ist das Johannes-Licht, welches eine kleine Weile fröhlich macht (Joh. 5, 35). Dieses ist aber noch nicht der ganze Rath Gottes zum Seligwerden; darum dürfen wir auch die Menschen bei diesem nicht stehen lassen, sonst ist dieses Licht bald wieder verschwunden, denn auch Johannes hat alle Bußfertigen zu Christo hingewiesen, über welches im folgenden Artikel vom wahren Glauben Näheres gesagt wird.

Ehe wir diesen Artikel schließen, müssen wir noch einen Gegenstand berühren, der hier am passendsten Platz sein möchte, indem von gewissen Gläubigen behauptet wird, die Menschen können nicht zur Erkenntniß der Sünden gebracht werden, ohne daß man ihnen zuerst das Gesetz Moses predige. Hierauf antworten wir, daß diese Behauptung mit der heiligen Schrift nicht kann bewiesen werden. Dagegen haben wir hinlängliche Beweise, daß der Heiland gesagt hat: Gehet hin und prediget das Evangelium (Matth. 28, 19. 20; Mark. 16, 15) und lehret sie halten Alles, was ich euch befohlen habe. Die Apostel suchten nur aus dem Gesetz und den Propheten zu beweisen, daß Jesus der Sohn Gottes und verheißene Messias sei. Zweitens: wenn es nicht möglich wäre, ohne durch das Gesetz Moses die Menschen zur Erkenntniß der Sünde zu bringen, so wären sie Alle von Adam bis auf Moses in ihren Sünden gestorben, denn ohne Erkenntniß

der Sünde kann keine Buße, und ohne Buße keine Vergebung der Sünden geschehen. Drittens: wenn es ohne das Gesetz Moses nicht möglich wäre, die Sünder zur Erkenntniß der Sünde zu bringen, warum hat Gott nicht Moses gesandt anstatt Elias, oder Johannes den Täufer, um dem Herrn einen Weg zu bereiten? Wenden wir uns zu den Aposteln. so finden wir, daß ihre Hauptpredigt darin bestand, Jesus von Nazareth, den die Hohenpriester und Schriftgelehrten als einen Verführer verworfen hatten, und an dem sie, die Juden, Mörder geworden waren, als den verheißenen Messias zu verkündigen, in dessen Namen allein sie die Vergebung der Sünden und die ewige Seligkeit erlangen könnten; dieses ging ihnen durch's Herz, daß sie fragten: Was sollen wir thun? Nun kommt die Frage: War es das Gesetz Moses, das ihnen ihre Hauptsünde, den Unglauben aufdeckte, daß dieser Jesus der Sohn Gottes sei, und um ihres Unglaubens willen sie zu Mördern an Ihm wurden? Oder war es die Wirkung des heiligen Geistes, die Kraft des Evangeliums, welches das Verborgene der Herzen an's Licht bringt? Auch möchten wir fragen, ob es nicht ebenso wohl möglich ist, wenn man Christum, den Gefreuzigten predigt, durch das Licht des Evangeliums, den Sündern Seine Eigenschaften: Seine Liebe, welche Ihn für uns Sünder an's Kreuz gebracht, Seine Geduld und Langmuth, Seine Mühe und Arbeit, die Er an Sünder wendet, oft an ihre Herzen anklopft und freundlich zuruft, daß Er Denen, die an Ihn glauben, Vergebung der Sünden, Frieden mit Gott und den Trost des ewigen Lebens geben will. Sollte ein Sünder in diesem Lichte sich nicht erkennen können und sich sagen müssen, daß er dieses nicht hat, und darum geneigt sein, den Rath Gottes zum Seligwerden anzunehmen, wenn nach der Apostel Weise gesagt wird: Wir bitten euch an Christi Statt laßt euch versöhnen mit Gott? Wenn wir nun noch betrachten, daß das Wort Gottes vom Kreuz eine Kraft Gottes ist, für Die, welche selig werden (Cor. 1, 18), so halten wir dafür, daß das Evangelium vermag, ohne das Gesetz Moses, den Menschen zur Erkenntniß der Sünden und zum Glauben, und durch den Glauben an das Blut Christi ohne des Gesetzes Werke gerecht zu machen.

Artikel 4.

Vom lebendigen Glauben.

Was ist ein wahrer, lebendiger Glaube? Der Glaube ist eine gewisse Zuversicht des,

das man hoffet, und nicht zweifelt an dem, das man nicht siehet (Ebr. 11, 1). Oder, das alles für wahr halten, das Gott verheißen hat in Seinem Worte. Da nun der Heiland Seinen Jüngern nicht bloß befohlen hat, Buße zu predigen um Vergebung der Sünden zu erlangen, sondern ebenso entschieden gesagt: Wer glaubt und getauft wird, wird selig werden, wer nicht glaubt, wird verdammt werden, so wissen wir, daß dem Glauben die Seligkeit, dem Unglauben die Verdammniß zugesagt ist. Darum soll man den ganzen Rath Gottes zum Seligwerden predigen, nämlich: daß der Sünder durch Buße Vergebung der Sünden erlangen, und durch den Glauben in der Taufe Christum anziehen kann (Gal. 3, 27). Da nun das Evangelium eine Kraft Gottes ist für Alle, die selig werden, und der Glaube aus der Predigt kommt, so wird der Sünder durch das Licht des Evangeliums immer mehr erleuchtet; sein Glaubens-Auge wird ihm geöffnet, daß er hineinschauen kann in das Geheimniß Gottes, sehen, was bereit liegt für den Sünder. Dadurch wird ein Verlangen im Herzen erweckt, das, was sein Glaubens-Auge erblickt, zu besitzen. Durch dieses Verlangen nöthigt der Sünder den Heiland, ihm den Glauben zu schenken, welcher, gleich einer Hand, um das, was das Auge gesehen, das Herz verlangt, zu erfassen und in Besitz zu nehmen. Wenn nun dieser wahre, lebendige Glaube im Herzen gewirkt ist und das, was im Eingang dieses Artikels gesagt, nämlich: Alles, was Gott in seinem Worte verheißen hat zu geben, für wahr hält, so kann dieser Glaube nicht lange unthätig sein. Denn er erweist sich nur dann lebendig, wenn er zugreift nach den von Gott bestimmten Mitteln. Und wie greift der Glaube zu? Er verlangt, getauft zu werden (Apst. 8, 36--39). Und wie größer sein Verlangen, je stärker sein Glaube, desto entschiedener verlangt er es, so daß man einem solchen Verlangen nachgeben muß, wenn man sich nicht versündigen will, denn der Befehl des Heilandes, die Gläubigen zu taufen, ist ebenso deutlich und bindend für Die, welche zum Tausen, von Gott als auch von Menschen verordnet sind. Somit können wir sicher daraus schließen, wo kein Bedürfniß ist und kein Verlangen, getauft zu werden, da ist auch kein wahrer, lebendiger Glaube, denn Gott hat Buße, Glauben und Taufe so mit einander verbunden, daß keines wohl ohne das andere bestehen kann. Da es aber in unserer Zeit noch oft vorkommt, wie einst beim Johannes (Matth. 3, 7. 8. 9), daß sie ohne Buße, ohne Herzensänderung wollen

getauft werden, die aber Johannes mit scharfen Ausdrücken zurückgewiesen; so haben wir zu prüfen, ob es ein bloßer Mundglaube, oder der wahre Glaube ist, welchem Buße und Vergebung der Sünden voranging. Denn der Mundglaube hat Kennzeichen sowohl als der lebendige Glaube. Diese Kennzeichen des Mundglaubens treten hervor, sobald man nach Buße fragt. Denn wenn Solche, die bloß einen Mundglauben haben, beanspruchen, die Schule der Buße durchgemacht zu haben, und man verlangt von ihnen das Schiboleth (Nicht. 12, 6), welches einst das Lösungswort der Gileaditer war, so kommt statt Schiboleth ein Siboleth heraus, und Diese können nicht über den Jordan gelassen werden. Der lebendige Glaube aber weiß, wie es in der Schule der Buße zugegangen ist.

Artikel 5.

Von der Taufe.

Was ist die Taufe, und was bedeutet sie? **Erstens:** Sie ist eine heilige Handlung und wird vom Apostel als gleichbedeutend betrachtet wie die Arche Noahs (1 Pet. 3, 20, 21), welche das von Gott bestimmte, auch dazu gebrauchte Mittel war, Noah mit Allem, was mit ihm zur Arche einging, am Leben zu erhalten.

Ebenso ist auch uns kein anderes Mittel von Gott gegeben, den Bund eines guten Gewissens mit Ihm aufzurichten, als die Taufe, wie Petrus sich ausdrückt: Nicht das Abthun des Unflats am Fleisch macht uns selig, sondern der Bund eines guten Gewissens mit Gott. **Zweitens:** ist die Taufe eine Thür in die neutestamentliche Arche, welche ist Jesus Christus (Gal. 3, 27), sowie in den sichtbaren Schafstall, oder die Gemeinde Gottes auf Erden, wodurch die Menschen in dieselbe aufgenommen werden. **Drittens:** ist die Taufe das Zeichen des Bundes, welchen Gott mit den Menschen aufrichtet, wenn sie nämlich gereinigt und geheiligt sind durch das Wasserbad im Worte (Eph. 5, 26), durch's Blut Christi erlöst vom bösen Gewissen. Da nun nach dem Worte Gottes kein ander Mittel kann bewiesen werden, den Bund eines guten Gewissens mit Gott aufzurichten, als die Taufe, so ist es sehr wichtig für Alle, denen die Taufe in der rechten Bedeutung vorgestellt wird, ob sie dieselbe annehmen oder verwerfen. Im Alten Testamente war die Todesstrafe darauf gelegt, wenn das Zeichen des Bundes nicht angenommen oder gegeben wurde, nämlich: die Beschneidung (1

Mose 17, 14). Nicht aber, wie heutzutage Viele die Kindertaufe dorthin leiten wollen. Dort war eine fleischliche Geburt, welche sie zu Bundesgenossen machte, hier aber muß eine geistliche Geburt vorgehen. Auch nicht, daß Jemand es auslege, wenn es heißt: Wiedergeboren werden aus Wasser und Geist; daß das Wasser bei der Taufe zur Wiedergeburt beitrage, sondern wie oben angeführt, das Wasserbad im Worte, welches eine Kraft Gottes ist. Die Bedeutung des Wassers in der Taufe hat einen ganz andern Sinn. Nur in der Taufe, wenn sie im evangelischen Sinn geübt wird, treten die drei Zeugen zusammen (1 Joh. 5, 8), denn Drei sind die da zeugen auf Erden: der Geist, das Wasser und das Blut, und diese Drei sind beisammen. Durch den Akt der Taufe, welche nur durch Wasser geschehen kann, bezeugt der Mensch, daß er durch's Blut Christi vom bösen Gewissen erlöst ist; durch den Geist bestätigt und besiegelt Gott diesen Bund.

Das Wasser ist das äußerliche Zeichen und der sichtbare Zeuge auf der Erde. Was macht die Taufe zu einer heiligen Handlung? Wenn auf der Seite des Menschen der lebendige Glaube da ist: der nimmt; und auf der andern Seite die Verheißung Gottes: die gibt. Wenn diese Beiden sich die Hände zum Bunde reichen und sich durch den Geist vereinigen und verbinden, das macht die Handlung zu einer heiligen und wichtigen. Fehlt aber der Glaube, so hat der Mensch keine Hand zum Nehmen; Gott kann und wird auch nicht geben. Dann ist die Handlung ein menschliches Werk, denn zum Bunde müssen auf beiden Seiten die Bestimmungen erfüllt werden, sonst findet kein Bund statt und die Heiligkeit fällt weg. Darum fragen wir, ehe wir taufen, besonders nach dem Glauben. Die Taufe geschieht durch einmaliges rückwärts Untertauchen in's Wasser, im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des heiligen Geistes. Nachdem wir, mit Handauflegung über den Täufling, gebetet, daß Gott den Bund, welchen der Täufling in der Taufe aufgerichtet, bestätigen und versiegeln wolle durch den heiligen Geist (Apst. 8, 15, 16, 17), dann wird der Täufling mit dem Kuß des Friedens begrüßt als ein Glied der Gemeinde (Röm. 16, 16 u. 1 Cor. 16, 20), welches auch als das Zeichen des Friedens unter den Gliedern der Gemeinde geübt wird (2 Cor. 13, 12; 1 Theff. 5, 26).

Wir geben dieser Taufform mehr Vorzug, weil wir glauben, daß sie mehr Grund im Worte habe. Wir lesen, daß Johannes im Wasser, das ist, im Jordan getauft hat (Matth.

3, 6); daß der Heiland selbst von ihm im Jordan getauft wurde (Vers 16). Daß Philippus und der Kämmerer in's Wasser stiegen (Apst. 8, 38), lesen wir deutlich genug; ob der Kämmerer aber im Wasser mit Wasser getauft, oder untergetaucht wurde, gibt uns die Schrift nicht genaue Auskunft. Betrachten wir (Joh. 3, 23), wo es heißt, „denn es war viel Wasser daselbst,“ so hat dieses für die Begießung weniger Anwendung. Ziehen wir noch in Betrachtung (Röm. 6, 4 u. Col. 2, 12), wo die Taufe eine Begrabung genannt wird, welche Stellen der Untertauchung besser entsprechen, als der Begießung. Deshalb glauben wir, daß die Untertauchung mehr Grund hat im Worte, und haben darum dieser den Vorzug gegeben. Doch sind wir weit entfernt, zu sagen, die Begießung sei keine Taufe, wenn sie auf den Glauben, und im Glauben, als die rechte Taufe, empfangen wird, zudem wir viele Märtyrer vor uns haben, die ihren Glauben mit dem Tode besiegelt, welche auch mit der Begießungs-Taufe getauft waren und Gott durch seinen Geist bestätigt hatte, welches wir für die Hauptsache ansehen.

Artikel 6.

Vom Abendmahl.

Wir glauben und bekennen, daß der Heiland das neutestamentliche Abendmahl, oder Brodbrechen, welches Er mit Seinen Jüngern gehalten in der Nacht, ehe Er sich selbst als ein unschuldiges Lamm am Stamme des Kreuzes aufgeopfert und mit Seinem Blute Alle, die an Ihn glauben, vom ewigen Tode erlöst, nicht nur Seinen Jüngern, sondern Allen, die durch Sein Blut erlöst sind von der Sklaverei der Sünde und der Knechtschaft des Teufels, hinterlassen und befohlen zu halten; aber nicht in dem Sinne, wie es Einige dafür halten, nämlich, zu glauben, daß das Brod und der Wein auf übernatürliche Weise durch die Einsegnung in den Leib und das Blut Christi verwandelt werde, oder wie noch Andere, die nicht an eine Verwandlung, doch aber Vergebung der Sünden darin zu erhalten glauben. Wir glauben, daß der Heiland nur für Solche das Abendmahl eingesetzt hat, die Ausgeführten aus dem Dienst der Sünde und Erlöste durch Sein Blut sind. Die können beim Halten des Mahles sich auf's Neue erinnern, und durch die äußeren Zeichen, des Brodes und Weines, welche den gebrochenen Leib und das geflossene Blut

vorstellen, recht lebendig in ihr Gedächtniß einprägen, wie viel Leiden und Schmerzen es Ihn gekostet hat, um sie zu erlösen. Durch das Essen des gebrochenen Brodes und Trinken des Weines bezeugen Solche, daß sie Seines Leibes und Blutes theilhaftig geworden sind und mit Ihm in Gemeinschaft stehen. Weil nun der Heiland nicht in der Gemeinschaft der Sünder steht, so ist es klar genug, daß Solche, die nach dem Sinn des Evangeliums Brod brechen und den Tod des Herrn verkündigen sollen, müssen durch Seinen Tod das Leben gefunden haben; sonst isset und trinket sich ein Jeder das Gericht. Darum, wo Sünden sind, heißt es: Heget aus den alten Sauerteig, damit ihr ein neuer Teig seid; denn wir haben auch ein Opferlamm, das ist Christus, für uns geopfert (1 Cor. 5, 7). Was die Zeit anbelangt, wie oft man Brod brechen soll, haben wir keine bestimmte Regel in der Schrift. Von der ersten Gemeinde heißt es: Sie blieben beständig in der Apostel Lehre, in der Gemeinschaft, und im Brodbrechen und im Gebet (Apst. 2, 42). Somit können wir sehen, wenn der Zustand der Gemeinde ein richtiger ist, daß es alle Tage geschehen könnte (Vers 46), weil es aber vom inneren Herzenszustande der Gemeindeglieder abhängt, kann keine bestimmte Zeit gesetzt werden. Je öfter es geschehen kann, nach evangelischem Sinne, desto lebendiger steht die Gemeinde.

Artikel 7.

Von der Fußwaschung.

Da der Heiland in der Nacht, da Er verathen ward, Seinen Jüngern die Füße gewaschen hat und gesagt: So Ich, als euer Herr und Meister, euch die Füße gewaschen habe, so sollt auch ihr euch unter einander die Füße waschen. In unserer gegenwärtigen Zeit werden verschiedene Auslegungen über die Bedeutung derselben gemacht, wann und wie oft dieselbe müsse gehalten werden. Damit nun das Wort unseres Heilandes weder ganz übergangen, noch auf der anderen Seite, ihm eine ganz andere Bedeutung gegeben werde, als der Heiland gegeben hat: so wollen wir die Weise, welche auf diese Handlung Bezug haben, kurz zusammenstellen, und das Urtheil, ob unsere Auffassung eine richtige, mit dem Bibelwort übereinstimmende sei, dem gereigten Leser selbst überlassen. Erstens finden wir keinen Beweis im neuen Testamente, daß die Apostel oder die Kirche Christi die Fußwaschung geübt haben bei dem Brodbrechen, weder vor, noch nach demselben; sondern Alle, die es so halten, berufen sich bloß auf das, daß der Heiland es habe unmittel-

telbar nach dem Abendmahle gehalten, weil es heißt: Da stand Er vom Abendmahl auf u. s. w. (Joh. 13, 4. 5). Es liegt aber hiefür eine thatsächliche Ursache, warum der Heiland gerade nach dem Abendmahle es gethan hat, wie wir es so klar und deutlich finden (Luk. 22, 24), wo es heißt: Es erhob sich auch ein Zank unter ihnen, welcher unter ihnen, nämlich, unter den Jüngern, sollte für den Größesten gehalten werden. Dieser Zank muß sich während des Abendmahles erhoben haben, denn Lukas knüpft ihn an die Frage, wo sie unter einander fragten: welcher es doch wäre, der Ihn verrathen würde. Diese Zankfrage müssen wir als Ursache ansehen, warum der Heiland vom Abendmahle aufstand und durch ein Exempel mit der That ihnen ihre Frage beantwortete. Für diesen Zweck konnte Er wohl kein passenderes Exempel wählen als das Füßwaschen, das im Morgenlande an den Reisenden und Gästen fleißig geübt worden war, von der Zeit Abrahams her bis zur Zeit des Apostels Paulus, wie wir aus den hier angewiesenen Schriftstellen deutlich sehen können: 1 Mose 18, 4; 19, 2; 24, 32; 43, 24; Richt. 19, 21; 1 Sam. 25, 41; 2 Sam. 11, 8; Luk. 7, 44; 1 Tim. 5, 10. Mit dieser Handlung waren die Jünger hinlänglich bekannt, wußten auch, daß es der äußerlichen Bedeutung nach ein Knechtesdienst war. Was aber der Heiland mit diesem Dienste, dem Er sich selbst unterzog, ihnen klar und verständlich machen wollte, nämlich: daß Derjenige, welcher sich als den Niedrigsten betrachtet und darum unter Alle sich demüthiget, in den Augen Gottes der Größte ist—also ein Bild der Demuth wollte er ihnen geben; das konnten sie nicht verstehen, und eben, weil sie die Handlung dem äußern Sinne nach beurtheilten, wollte auch Petrus sich nicht von seinem Herrn und Meister die Füße waschen lassen. Daß auch der Heiland nicht so wohl die Handlung, als das, was Er dadurch ihnen verständlich machen wollte, im Auge hatte geht aus Seinen Worten hervor, indem Er sagt: Was ich thue, das weißt du jetzt nicht (Joh. 13, 7), du wirst es aber hernach erfahren. Petrus hatte ja doch gesehen, was Er gethan. Aber nachdem die Handlung vorbei war, fragt der Heiland: Wißet ihr, was Ich euch gethan habe? Ihr heißet Mich Meister und Herr, und Ich bin es auch; so Ich als Meister und Herr euch die Füße gewaschen habe, so sollt ihr auch euch unter einander die Füße waschen: nämlich euch unter einander demüthigen; darin liegt die rechte Größe. Daß die Apostel diesem Befehle ihres Heilandes nachgekommen sind, glau-

ben wir; daß sie es aber ausschließlich mit dem Brodbrechen verbunden, läßt sich mit der Schrift nicht beweisen. Hiefür zeugen die Worte Pauli, indem er die oben angeführte Stelle von der Fußwaschung mit zur Gastfreundschaft und unter die guten Werke stellt. Dazu gaben zu derselben Zeit die vielen Reisen der Apostel und ihrer Mitarbeiter, wie auch anderer Glieder, von einer Gemeinde zur andern, hinlänglich Gelegenheit, diesen Liebesdienst gegen und unter einander zu beweisen. Später finden wir in den Kirchengeschichten, daß die ersten Christen in den Verfolgungszeiten sehr fleißig die Gefangenen besuchten, und als Beweis ihrer Liebe und Hochachtung ihnen die Füße gewaschen. Da aber in unserer Zeit das Reisen zu Fuß wenig vorkommt, und in dieser Friedenszeit auch keine Brüder oder Schwestern in der Gefangenschaft sind, ist daher auch in dieser Beziehung keine Gelegenheit geboten, diesen Liebedienst zu üben. Daß aber der Befehl unseres Heilandes nicht übergangen, so sollt ihr auch euch unter einander die Füße waschen; auch nicht eine bloße Form daraus machen, denn sobald es zur Form wird, fällt der Segen hinweg. Wenn nun die Liebe und die Herzensdemuth so die Herzen erfüllet, daß daraus ein Verlangen entsteht, eine Gelegenheit zu haben, den Andern in etwas zu dienen, so kann das Füßwaschen als das äußerliche Zeichen der innerlichen Waschung durch's Blut Christi bezeichnet werden. Ist der Mensch durch's Blut Christi gereinigt oder gewaschen, so hat er einen Theil an Ihm.

Nun hat sich ein Jedes selbst zu prüfen, ob es auch bereit wäre, ein größeres Opfer zu bringen, als nur die Füße zu waschen, wenn durch dieses äußere Zeichen ausgesprochen wird, daß die Liebe da sei, um zu dienen, oder sich unter das Andere zu demüthigen. Der Heiland war zu einem größeren Opfer bereit für Seine Jünger; also kann auch Gott ein größeres von uns verlangen. Ist die Liebe unseres Heilandes nicht in unseren Herzen vorhanden, die ein Bedürfniß hat, zu dienen; so würden wir nicht bestehen, wenn Gott ein größeres Opfer von uns verlangen sollte, nämlich: durch Gaben der Liebe. Wird nun auf diese Weise, und nach diesem Sinne, die Fußwaschung unter den Gliedern in der Gemeinde von Zeit zu Zeit geübet, so wird sie auch mit Segen begleitet sein, und der Befehl unseres Heilandes befolget.

Artikel 8.

Vom apostolischen Bann.

Der Bann, oder die Absonderung der Bösen aus der Gemeinde, bedeutet das Gleiche, und ist vom Heilande selbst Seinen Jüngern gegeben und befohlen (Matth. 8, 15—18). Hier gibt uns der Heiland genaue Anweisung, wie wir mit Brudersünden zu verfahren haben. Nämlich, wenn der Bruder der dritten Verwarnung, oder Bestrafung, welche von der Gemeinde geschehen muß, kein Gehör gibt, das ist, sich nicht demüthigt und bessert, so halte ihn für einen Heiden und Zöllner. Mit diesen hatten die Juden keine Gemeinschaft, durften auch nicht mit ihnen essen (Luk. 5 30). Er sagte zu Seinen Jüngern: Was ihr auf Erden bindet, soll auch im Himmel gebunden sein, und was ihr auf Erden löset, soll auch im Himmel los sein. Diese Macht hat der Heiland Seiner Gemeinde gegeben, und obwohl zur Züchtigung und Verderben des Fleisches, doch zur Heilung und Erlösung der Seele (1 Cor. 5, 5). Es ist aber noch ein Unterschied zu machen zwischen solchen Sündern, die da müssen abgesondert werden von der Gemeinde, nämlich, Die, von denen Paulus sagt (1 Cor. 5, 11): So jemand ist, der sich läßt ein Bruder nennen, und ist ein Hurer, Geiziger, Abgöttischer, Lasterer, Trunkenbold, oder Räuber; mit demselbigen sollt ihr auch nicht essen. Solche müssen nicht erst dreimal ermahnet werden, sondern, sobald die Schuld hinlänglich erwiesen ist, müssen sie ausgeschlossen und gemieden werden; doch nicht, ohne dem betreffenden Gliede eine Gelegenheit zu geben, selbst bei der Untersuchung gegenwärtig zu sein; oder wenn das Glied die Gelegenheit, wenn dieselbe ihm geboten wird, nicht benützen will, so soll es ihm, ehe man es meidet, angezeigt werden, warum es ausgeschlossen und gemieden wird. So ein solch ausgeschlossenes Glied Ermahnung annimmt, soll es ermahnet werden, daß es umkehren möchte und zur Buße bewogen werde. Die andern Bibelfstellen, welche sich auf den Bann und die Meidung beziehen, wie: Tit. 3, 10 u. 2 Thess. 3, 6. 14. 15., stimmen alle mit einander überein, daß die Sünder müssen aus der Gemeinde ausgesondert werden; sonst fällt der Bann von Gott auf die Gemeinde, wie am Volke Israel zu sehen ist (Jos. 7, 10—26). Nun aber wenden Etliche ein, weil der Heiland auch mit Zöllnern und Sündern gegessen hat (Luk. 5, 29. 30), man gehe zu weit, wenn man die Sünder meide, das ist, nicht mit ihnen esse, noch mit ihnen zu schaffen habe. Dieser Ein-

wand wird aber deutlich aufgelöst (1 Cor. 5, 10). Das meine ich gar nicht von den Hurern, Geizigen, Räubern u. s. w. in dieser Welt; sonst müßtet ihr die Welt räumen. Solche waren jene Zöllner und Sünder; sie gehörten noch nicht zur Gemeinde Christi, waren daher noch unbefehrt und keine Brüder. Obwohl solche unbefehrte Menschen in gleichen Sünden dastehen mögen, ist uns nicht geboten, sie zu meiden. Durch die angeführten Schriftstellen können wir genugsam sehen, daß keine Gemeinde Gottes ohne diesen Bann bestehen kann. Doch soll der Bann nicht länger gelassen werden, als bis Buße und Umkehr stattfindet, denn wenn der Bann nicht zum Töden, sondern zum Heilen des kranken Gliedes ist; so muß er auch aufgelöst werden, sobald Besserung stattgefunden hat. Das ausgeschlossene Glied soll dann wieder in die völlige Gemeinschaft aufgenommen werden.

Artikel 9.

Von der Berufung der Prediger, oder Diener des Evangeliums.

Die Berufung der Prediger geschieht auf verschiedene Weise, wie wir im Alten Testamente bei Mose und den Propheten sehen können. Mose wurde berufen von Gott selbst, und Gott gab ihm unzweifelhafte Zeichen, ihn zu überzeugen, daß er nicht wohl zweifeln konnte, daß es Gott sei, der ihn senden wolle. Aber Mose sah wohl im voraus, was für Noth und Schwierigkeiten auf ihn warteten. Darum wollte er sich entschuldigen, er sei nicht wohl beredt und habe eine schwere Zunge (2 Mose 4, 10); Jeremia desgleichen; obgleich ihm der Herr sagte, daß Er ihn schon im Mutterleibe zum Propheten bestimmt habe, wollte er auch ausweichen, indem er sagte: Ich taue nicht zum Predigen, denn ich bin zu jung (Jer. 1, 6). Jesaja, nachdem er den Herrn gesehen mit seinen Augen, und darum glaubte, er müsse vergehen, weil er unreiner Lippen war, wurde vom Engel durch eine glühende Kohle vom Altar von seiner Missethat gereinigt. Als seine Sünde versöhnt, bietet er sich selbst Gott an, da er die Stimme des Herrn hörte sagen: Wen soll Ich senden und wer will Unser Bote sein? Er sprach: Hier bin ich; sende mich (Jes. 6, 6—9). Die Apostel hatten ihre Berufung vom Heilande selbst: Gehet hin in alle Welt u. s. w. (Matth. 28, 18—20); so auch der Apostel Paulus (Apsl. 9, 15), wie er selbst sagte, nicht von Menschen, auch nicht durch Menschen, sondern durch Jesum Christum (Gal. 1, 1). Hiemit ist aber nicht gesagt, noch bewiesen, daß Alle auf

solche entschiedene Weise von Gott oder Jesu Christo berufen werden, und es durch solche unzweifelhaften Zeugnisse geschehen müsse; denn obwohl alle anderen Propheten, mit Ausnahme Elias, unmittelbar von Gott berufen waren, wissen wir nur so viel, daß es heißt: Die Hand des Herrn kam über ihn! oder: Es geschah des Herrn Wort zu ihm (Hesek. 1, 3); oder: Er war vom Geist des Herrn angezogen (2 Chron. 24, 20). Kommen wir aber auf unsere Zeit, und legen uns die Frage vor: Werden zu unserer Zeit noch Prediger, oder Diener des Wortes, unmittelbar von Gott berufen; und wenn so, auf welche Weise? Obwohl diese Frage von Vielen verneint wird, so sagen wir unseres Theils nichts desto weniger Ja. Was die Art und Weise anbetrifft, so sagen wir: die erste Hauptbedingung, wenn eine solche unmittelbare Berufung soll oder kann stattfinden, ist die: daß ein Jeder zuerst zur Thüre in den Schafstall eingegangen sei; sonst ist er ein Dieb und ein Mörder, sagt der Heiland. Wer aber zur Thür hineingeht, der ist ein Hirte der Schafe (Johannes 10, 1. 2). Das ist aber nicht gemeint, daß Alle Hirten seien, oder dazu berufen, die zur Thüre hineingegangen sind, sondern wir reden hier nur von der Berufung der Hirten. Wer beansprucht, eine Berufung von Gott zu haben, und ist nicht durch Buße der Sünde abgestorben, so lebet der alte Mensch noch; der kann nicht die Ehre Gottes suchen, sondern er sucht seine eigene Ehre und raubet Gott, was Sein ist (Röm. 2, 19–24). Darum heißt der Heiland Solche Diebe und Mörder. Zu Solchen wurden Alle gezählet, die nicht an den Sohn Gottes glaubten, daher nicht im Blute Christi Vergebung der Sünden erlangt; denn um der Sünde willen ist der Heiland an's Kreuz gebracht, wenn Solche auch nicht wie Jene rufen: Kreuzige ihn. Jene hatten es auch unwissend gethan, und doch sagt Stephanus: Ihr seid Mörder an Ihm geworden (Apst. 7, 52). Daher sagen wir nochmals, die erste und nothwendigste Bedingung, um ein Hirte der Schafe zu werden, ist die: daß Jeder, wenn Gott ihn berufen soll oder kann, durch's Blut Christi Vergebung der Sünden und durch den Glauben in der Taufe Christum angezogen habe (Gal. 3, 27). Dann ist er zur Thüre hineingegangen in den Schafstall. Die zweite Bedingung ist: aus inniger Dankbarkeit zu dem Heiland für die Erlösung durch Sein Blut, Ihn nun über Alles zu lieben. Weil diese Liebe eine Frucht des heiligen Geistes ist, so hat sie auch die gleichen Eigenschaften, welche

den Heiland auf diese Erde getrieben, aus Liebe zu den Sündern keine Leiden, noch Schmerzen, ja selbst den Tod nicht zu scheuen. Darum sehen wir, als der Heiland dem Petrus das Hirtenamt übergab, so hat Er ihn zum dritten Male gefragt: Simon Petrus, hast du mich lieb (Joh. 21, 15–17)? Diese Liebe kann nicht unthätig bleiben, sondern sie sucht zu wirken für den Heiland, aber womöglich im Stillen und Verborgenen. Die dritte Bedingung für diese Berufung ist die: daß der Mensch eine Uebergabe an Gott wird und auf zeitliche Vortheile in der Welt oder gute Tage verzichtet, auch auf Schmach, Verachtung und Widerspruch sich gefaßt machen muß. Weil aber dieses gegen die Natur gehet, ist es eine Probe, die nicht sehr Viele aushalten. Es ist aber selbstverständlich, daß wenn auch diese drei Bedingungen sich vorfinden, daß auch die vierte, welche der Apostel als nothwendig angibt, vorhanden sein muß, wenn die Berufung mittelbar geschieht (1 Tim. 3, 2–13). Wo aber die Berufung von Gott unmittelbar geschieht, so soll es sich auch ausweisen, ob das Wort eine Kraft Gottes besitzt, und sich als ein Lebendiges erweist; denn daran wurden die wahren Propheten erkannt, daß ihr Wort in Erfüllung ging. So auch hier—wenn es das Verborgene der Herzen offenbar macht, ist es das Wort Gottes. Daß aber ein jeder Lehrer ein Zeugniß haben muß für sich selbst, ist klar; denn weil dieser Beruf weder Geld noch Ehrwürden einbringt und auf vielen Widerspruch stößt, auch oft seine Arbeit umsonst zu sein scheint, wie es dem Propheten erging (Jes. 49, 4), kann kein Lehrer lange bestehen, wenn er nicht weiß, daß er berufen ist. Es kann aber Manchem noch ergehen wie Mose, der auch sich fürchtete vor dem Unglauben der Kinder Israels, und seine Unfähigkeit als Entschuldigung vorbringen und sagen wie Mose: Send, wen du senden willst (2 Mose 4, 10–13). Wenn aber Gott nicht zurückgeht in Seinem Ruf, so weiß dann der wohl, daß er nicht selbst gewählt hat, sondern lieber die Wahl nicht angenommen, wenn er anders Ruhe in seinem Herzen gefunden hätte, und dann gibt ihm Gott auch ein Zeugniß, daran er sich halten kann. Es gibt auch eine mittelbare Berufung durch Menschen, nämlich: es kann der Zustand in einer Gemeinde eintreten, daß nicht genug Diener sind, die unmittelbare Berufung haben. In solchem Falle kann die Gemeinde diesen Mangel ersetzen, wie wir sehen in Tit. 1, 5 u. 1 Tim. 3, 1–15. Hier wurden die Bischöfe und Diener durch die Lehrer, welche anstatt Paulus in den

Gemeinden wirkten, Timotheus und Titus, in ihre Ämter eingesetzt oder berufen. Es ist nicht bestimmt, aber man kann annehmen, daß die Lehrer Solche, die sie als zu dem Amte tauglich ansahen, der Gemeinde vorgestellt oder ernannt, und dann von der Gemeinde erwählt wurden; denn bei den Dienerinnen heißt es, laß keine Wittve erwählt werden unter sechzig Jahren (1 Tim. 5, 9. 10).

Einen andern Beweis haben wir (Apsl. 1, 23—26), daß die Apostel über Zwei, die sie als gottesfürchtig erkannten, nachdem sie gebetet hatten, daß der Herr, der allein Herzenskündiger ist, unter diesen Zweien anzeigen wolle, welchen er erwählt habe, das Loos geworfen. Freilich wird hier eingewendet, daß die Apostel noch nicht den heiligen Geist hatten, als sie durch's Loos unter diesen Zweien entschieden. Man kann aber auch nicht sagen, daß die Menschen, wenn sie auch den heiligen Geist haben, sich nicht an den Menschen täuschen könnten. Wir finden auch nicht, daß diese Wahl durch's Loos einmal sei in Frage gestellt worden, nachdem sie den heiligen Geist hatten. Wir glauben, wenn die Wahl zuerst durch Lehrer oder die Gemeinde gemacht; so daß nur zwischen Zweien oder Dreien zu entscheiden ist; daß wenn die Gemeinde es durch Gebet dem Herzenskündiger übergibt, durch's Loos zu entscheiden, wenn es im Glauben geschieht, es ebenso Gott wohlgefällig, und daher so gut ist, als wenn es durch die Wahl der Gemeinde geschieht. In beiden Fällen soll die vom Apostel verlangte Qualifikation (Eigenschaft) nicht fehlen. Dieses sind mittelbare Berufungen. Die unmittelbare Berufung setzt aber den, der beansprucht, sie erlangt zu haben, einer stärkeren Probe aus; erstens, weil diese Berufungen oft in Frage gestellt werden; zweitens, weil keine Gemeinde genöthigt ist, eine solche anzuerkennen, bis sie hinlänglich Zeugniß und Beweise von derselben hat. Was die Ordination betrifft, glauben wir, daß Alle, welche zu einem Dienst in der Gemeinde erwählt oder berufen werden, durch Gebet und Handauflegung in ihr Amt eingesetzt werden sollen (Apsl. 6, 6 u. 13, 3).

Artikel 10.

Vom Eidschwören.

Das Eidschwören war wohl im Alten Bunde nicht verboten, wenn sie das, was sie mit einem Eide versprochen hatten, getreulich hielten; also den Namen Gottes, in welchem sie geschworen, nicht mißbrauchten und nicht falsch schwuren (2 Mose 20, 7 u. 3 Mose 19, 12).

Auch Viele, die sich Christen nennen, sagen, der Heiland habe nur das Falschschwören verboten, das wahre Schwören, wenn es von der Obrigkeit verlangt werde, sei nicht Unrecht. Die Worte unseres Heilandes sind aber so klar und unzweideutig, daß man nicht wohl daran zweifeln kann, indem Er sagt: Ich aber sage euch, daß ihr allerdinge nicht schwöret, weder bei dem Himmel, denn er ist Gottes Stuhl; noch bei der Erde, denn sie ist Seiner Füße Schemel; noch bei Jerusalem, denn sie ist eines großen Königs Stadt. Auch sollst du nicht bei deinem Haupte schwören, denn du vermagst nicht ein einziges Haar weiß oder schwarz zu machen. Eure Rede aber sei: Ja, Ja; und Nein, Nein; was darüber ist, das ist vom Uebel (Matth. 5, 34—37; 2 Cor. 1, 17; Jak. 5, 12). Diese Worte unseres Heilandes und die Zeugnisse Seiner Apostel zeigen uns klar und deutlich, daß die wahren Nachfolger Jesu Christi unter keinen Umständen schwören sollen, sondern daß es bei ihnen bei dem Ja und Nein bleibe, wie Christus und die Apostel geboten haben.

Artikel 11.

Von der Wehrlosigkeit, den Wahlen und weltlichen Ämtern.

Was wir unter Wehrlosigkeit verstehen, ist für's Erste: nicht zum Schwerte greifen; nicht in den Krieg ziehen, und nicht Blut zu vergießen, weil es in direktem Widerspruche mit den Worten unseres Heilandes ist (Matth. 5, 38. 39. 43. 44). Wenn wir nun dem Uebel nicht widerstreben sollen, das ist, durch Waffengewalt; sondern den Feind lieben, anstatt hassen; ihm Gutes für Böses erweisen, und im Kriege das Gegentheil geschehen muß; denn es ist eine bekannte Thatsache, daß Alle, die in den Krieg ziehen, verpflichtet werden, dem Feinde so viel als möglich Schaden zu thun, und statt wie es der Heiland im Neuen Testamente befohlen und bewiesen hat (Luk. 9, 55. 56): Wisset ihr nicht, welches Geistes Kinder ihr seid? Des Menschen Sohn ist nicht gekommen, der Menschen Seelen zu verderben, sondern zu erhalten; im Kriege aber wird gefordert, so Viele als möglich zu tödten. Weil der Heiland als ein Friedensfürst gekommen ist, ein Friedensreich aufzurichten, so hat Er selbst keinen Gebrauch gemacht von Waffen aus Eisen und Stahl; darum sagte er zu Petrus: Stecke dein Schwert an seinen Ort, denn wer das Schwert nimmt, soll durch's Schwert umkommen (Matth. 26, 52; Joh. 18, 11). Aus diesen angeführten Schriftstellen können wir sehen, daß wahre Nachfolger Jesu nicht in den Krieg ziehen, noch Blut ver-

gießen können, obwohl eingewendet wird von Solchen, die entweder nicht Licht genug haben über die Lehre Christi, oder auch nicht Lust, diesen Verleugnungsweg zu gehen: das Wort Gottes verlange, daß man der Obrigkeit gehorsam sei. Hierauf antworten wir: man muß Gott mehr gehorchen als den Menschen (Apsst. 4, 19). Wenn die Obrigkeit etwas von uns verlangt, das gegen das Wort Gottes ist, sind wir denn schuldig ihr mehr zu gehorchen denn Gott? Nein! Zweitens wird eingewendet, wenn die Gläubigen sich nicht wehren, sondern mit sich machen lassen, was man will, so würden zuletzt die Gottlosen ihnen Alles nehmen und sie austrotten. Daß der Hochmuth und die Bosheit der Gottlosen groß genug wäre, solches zu thun an den Gläubigen, ist ohne Zweifel. Nun aber ist Gott im Himmel ihr Schutz, und wir haben so deutliche Beweise, daß die Menschen Nichts zu thun vermögen, wenn es nicht im Rathschlusse Gottes ist, wie wir sehen an Daniel und seinen Freunden, daß ihre Feinde sich das, was sie aus Haß und Neid diesen zubereitet, selbst auf den Kopf gebracht haben (Dan. 3. 22—28 u. 6, 15—25; 2 Kön. 19, 35 u. 6, 13—24). Dieses letzte Exempel zeigt uns klar, daß der Prophet Elisa durch die Macht des Gebetes stärker war und mehr ausrichtete als mit einem Kriegsheere; aber obwohl die Syrier in seiner und des Königs von Israel Gewalt waren, der auch fragte, ob er sie mit dem Schwerte schlagen solle, wollte er nicht Gebrauch machen von der Macht des fleischlichen Arms, sondern erwies ihnen Gutes für das Böse, das sie im Sinne hatten, aber durch die Macht Gottes ohne Schwert verhindert wurden; und daß dieses Verfahren wirksam war, können wir deutlich lesen, denn es heißt: Nach diesem kamen die Kriegsleute der Syrier nicht mehr in's Land Israel. Das Gleiche glauben wir vom Sanitäts-, oder Spitaldienste; weil von Denen, die in diesem Dienste sind, verlangt wird, Waffen zu tragen und Exerciren zu lernen, sowie auch, Militär-Uniform zu tragen, was nicht verträglich ist mit dem wehrlosen Zustande. Ebenfalls glauben wir, daß es nicht verträglich sei mit der Lehre Jesu Christi, daß ein Gläubiger kann weltliche Aemter bekleiden; denn ein Jeder, der ein Amt annimmt, wird verpflichtet und muß schwören, die Gesetze nach seinem besten Wissen in Ausführung zu bringen. Da aber die weltlichen Gesetze oft gerade im Widerspruche mit dem Worte unseres Heilandes sind, der gesagt: Wer dir den Rock nimmt, dem lasse auch den Mantel, und wer dir das Deine nimmt,

dem fordere es nicht wieder (Matth. 5, 40; Luk. 6, 30); dieses ist aber das Gegentheil von dem, für was die Aemter bestimmt sind, nämlich: Einem Jeden wieder zu dem Gestohlenen zu verhelfen, wozu das Gesetz ihnen die Macht gibt. Dieses zeigt uns hinlänglich, daß kein Gläubiger, ohne der Lehre Jesu entgegen zu handeln, ein weltliches Amt bekleiden kann. Dasselbe gilt auch von den Geschworenen (jurymen), deren Pflicht es ist, Streithändel zu entscheiden; auch hängt von ihrem Urtheil oder Entscheidung, Todesstrafe ab, wenn sie den zu Verurtheilenden im ersten Grade als der That schuldig erklären, auf welche das Gesetz die Todesstrafe legt. Was die weltlichen Wahlen betrifft, so glauben wir, daß wenn Gläubige, oder Nachfolger Christi, selbst keine Aemter können annehmen, so können sie aus gleichen Ursachen nicht helfen durch ihre Stimmen Jemand in ein Amt einzusetzen; denn wenn sie dazu helfen, Solche in ihre Aemter einzusetzen, sollten sie ihnen auch gehorsam sein und sie unterstützen, was aber nach der Lehre Jesu nicht möglich ist, weil, wie schon gesagt, die weltlichen Gesetze oftmals im Widerspruche sind mit dem Gesetze Gottes. Auch sagt der Apostel: Das befremdet sie, daß ihr nicht mit ihnen lauset in dasselbe wüste unordentliche Wesen u. s. w. (1 Pet. 4, 4). Unseres Wissens gibt es kein Verhältniß oder Umstand, wo mehr gescholten, gelästert und verleumdet wird von einer Partei über die andere, wie in den politischen Wahlkämpfen. So lange die Gläubigen mit ihnen laufen, kann es sie nicht befremden; wenn aber Gläubige nicht mehr mit ihnen laufen und es befremdet sie, dann stehen die Gläubigen im rechten Verhältnisse, nach dem Worte des Apostels. Darum sollen die Gläubigen das Wählen Denen überlassen, die zum Reiche dieser Welt gehören. Denen, die zum Reiche Christi gehören sagt Er: Mein Reich ist nicht von dieser Welt; sonst würden meine Diener darob kämpfen (Joh. 18, 36). Somit verstehen wir, daß die Gläubigen ihre Zeit und Kräfte für das Reich Gottes verwenden sollen, und das Andere Denen überlassen, die noch zum Reiche dieser Welt gehören.

Artikel 12.

Ueber den Ehestand.

Da Gott im Anfange bei der Schöpfung der Welt auch für gut befunden, Menschen nach Seinem Ebenbilde zu machen, nachdem Er Adam gemacht und ihn in's Paradies, den Garten Eden gesetzt, sprach Er: Es ist nicht gut, daß der Mensch allein sei: ich will ihm

eine Gehülfin machen, die um ihn sei (1 Mose 2, 18). Daraus verstehen wir, daß Gott selbst den Ehestand eingesetzt hat, und der Heiland bestätigt es, wenn Er sagt: Habt ihr nicht gelesen, daß Der im Anfang den Menschen gemacht hat, Der machte, daß ein Mann und ein Weib sein sollte (Matth. 19, 4). Wir finden auch, daß die Apostel alle, mit Ausnahme von Barnabas und Paulus, im Stand der Ehe waren (1 Cor. 9, 5. 6), und Paulus sagt: Allein, daß es in dem Herrn geschehe. Also glauben wir auch, daß, wenn der Ehestand nach dem Willen und in der Furcht Gottes angefangen wird, der Segen Gottes darauf ruht. Wir aber glauben ebenfalls, daß es nicht dem Herrn wohlgefällig, und daher nicht im Herrn geschehen kann, außer der Gliederschaft der Gemeinde zu heirathen, nämlich, Gläubige sich mit Ungläubigen zu verbinden. Erstens sehen wir schon zur Zeit Noahs, als die Kinder Gottes sich mit den Töchtern der Menschen (Ungläubigen) vermischten, daß sie dadurch zur Sünde und zum Abfall von Gott geleitet wurden, und dadurch die Sündfluth herbeigeführt haben (1 Mose 6, 2). Zweitens: hat Gott, um der Gefahr vorzubeugen, daß die Gläubigen nicht so bald von Ungläubigen zur Abgötterei verführt würden, verboten und gesagt: Ihr sollt euch mit ihnen nicht befreunden, eure Töchter sollt ihr nicht geben ihren Söhnen, und ihre Töchter sollt ihr nicht nehmen euren Söhnen (5 Mose 7, 3. 4. 5). Dieses Gebot wurde von den Kindern Israels, wenn sie im richtigen Verhältnisse zu Gott standen, strenge durchgeführt (Esra 10, 1—15). Dieses Gebot hat der Heiland nicht aufgelöst, und wir sehen, daß die Apostel es also hielten, denn Paulus sagt: Haben wir nicht Macht, eine Schwester mit als Weib herum zu führen, wie die andern Apostel und des Herrn Brüder (1 Cor. 9, 5)? Dieses Wort nämlich, *e i n e S c h w e s t e r*, ist entscheidend, daß es in der Gliederschaft, und nicht außerhalb derselben geschehen soll; in Folge dessen kann es keine Gemeinde zugeben, wenn sie bestehen will, sondern die Ungehorsamen gegen dieses Wort müssen bestraft werden wie andere Sünder.

Artikel 13.

Von der Ehescheidung.

Was das Ehescheiden betrifft, halten wir uns an das Wort unseres Heilandes (Matth. 5, 32 u. 19, 8. 9): Ich aber sage euch: wer sich von seinem Weibe scheidet,; (es sei denn um Ehebruch); der macht, daß sie die Ehe bricht; und wer eine Abgeschiedene freiet, der bricht die Ehe. Der Apostel sagt (1 Cor. 7, 11): So sie sich aber scheidet, daß sie ohne Ehe bleibe, oder sich mit dem Manne versöhne. Und weiter sagt er: So ein Bruder ein ungläubig Weib hat, und sie läßt sich gefallen, bei ihm zu wohnen, so scheide er sich nicht. Wenn der Apostel sagt: Daß sie ohne Ehe bleibe, oder sich mit dem Manne versöhne; verstehen wir so: wenn der Theil, welcher in Ehebruch gefallen ist, Buße thut für seine Sünden und verlangt, sich wieder zu versöhnen mit dem andern Theile, so kann durch eine Versöhnung zwischen diesen Beiden das eheliche Verhältniß wiederhergestellt werden. Eine Ehe mit einer andern Person ist nach dem Worte unseres Heilandes nicht erlaubt; daher glauben wir, daß Menschen, dem Evangelium nach, kein Recht haben, Ehen zu scheiden und den Geschiedenen das Recht zu geben, wieder zu ehelichen.



GLAUBENSBEKENNTNIS DER MENNONITEN IN REINLAND
MANITOBA, NORD AMERIKA, 1881

The full text of this confession can be found in Section Two, IV.A. in connection with the Evangelical Mennonite Church--Kleine Gemeinde. A reference to it here has been included because of its broader significance in the development of the Canadian Mennonite tradition, especially in southern Manitoba. Its importance goes beyond the formation of a single denomination like the EMC-KG, for it contributes significantly to the identity-formation of the various groups associated with the Old Colony Mennonites, a socio-religious group originating in Manitoba.

Im Auftrage der Predigerkonferenz zusammenge-
stellt und revidiert auf Grund der Bekenntnisse
der Mennoniten in Preußen und Rußland
und von der Allgemeinen Konferenz in
Winkler, 1930, gutgeheißen und
angenommen.

I.

Von der heiligen Schrift

glauben und bekennen wir, daß sie aus allen kanoni-
schen Büchern alten und neuen Testaments besteht, und
daß sie Gottes Wort ist, „denn die heiligen Menschen
Gottes haben geredet, getrieben durch den heiligen Geist.“
2. Petri 1, 21.

Daher ist sie auch die Hauptquelle göttlicher Offen-
barungen und Gottes heiligen Willens. Sie ist das Buch
aller Bücher, dem keins auf Erden gleich ist, mehr zu
Herzen dringend als Mutterrede, und doch von solcher
Geistestiefe, daß auch der Klügste es nicht erschöpft.
„Das Wort Gottes ist lebendig und kräftig, und schärfer,
denn ein zweischneidig Schwert, und durchdringt, bis
daß es scheidet Seele und Geist, auch Mark und Bein,
und ist ein Richter der Gedanken und Sinne des Her-
zens.“ Ebr. 4, 12.

Da wir nun wissen, daß die heilige Schrift Gottes
Wort und die Offenbarung seines heiligen Willens ist,
so ist dieses unser Bekenntnis in kurzer Fassung aus der-
selben entnommen, und muß die heilige Schrift auch die
Richtschnur unseres Glaubens und Lebens sein nach Ps.
119, 105: „Dein Wort ist meines Fußes Leuchte und ein
Licht auf meinem Wege,“ und nach 2. Tim. 3, 16: „Denn
alle Schrift, von Gott eingegeben, ist nütze zur Lehre,
zur Strafe, zur Besserung, zur Züchtigung in der Ge-
rechtigkeit,“ und unser Heiland nennt diejenigen selig,
die Gottes Wort hören und bewahren Luk. 11, 28. Die
heilige Schrift ist wahrhaftig: „denn Himmel und Erde
werden vergehen, aber meine Worte werden nicht verge-
hen,“ spricht Christus. Matth. 24, 35.

II.

Von Gott

glauben und bekennen wir: Es ist nur ein Gott, der sich
uns geoffenbaret hat als Vater, Sohn und heiliger Geist.

Von Gott, dem Vater, glauben und bekennen wir,
daß er ist ein einziger, ewiger, allmächtiger, allwissender,
allgegenwärtiger, heiliger, barmherziger und gnädiger
Gott, daß er ist der Schöpfer, Erhalter und Regierer
Himmels und der Erde, daß er ist der Herr aller Herren
und König aller Könige und daß er seine Ehre keinem
anderen lassen will, noch seinen Ruhm den Götzen.

Von Gott, dem Sohne Jesus Christus, glauben und
bekennen wir, daß er ist Gottes eingeborener Sohn, unser
Herr, Heiland, Erlöser und Seligmacher, der von Ewig-
keit her auf eine unbegreifliche Weise von Gott, seinem
Vater, ausgegangen, Micha 5, 1 und aus unergründlicher
Liebe zu uns Menschen, als die Zeit erfüllet war, wahr-
haftiger Mensch geworden ist, — uns in allem gleich, —
ausgenommen die Sünde, der empfangen ist von dem
heiligen Geist, geboren von der reinen Jungfrau Maria,
gelitten unter Pontio Pilato, gekreuziget, gestorben und
begraben; am dritten Tage auferstanden von den Toten,
aufgefahren gen Himmel, sitzend zur rechten Hand Gottes,
des allmächtigen Vaters, von dannen er kommen wird,
zu richten die Lebendigen und die Toten.

Von Gott, dem heiligen Geiste, glauben und be-

kennen wir, daß er vom Vater ausgehet und vom Sohne
gesandt wird und mit ihnen gleichen Wesens ist; daß er
noch heute wie bei der Schöpfung und zur Zeit der Apostel
fort und fort auf Erden wirkt, und daß wir ohne ihn
Jesus Christum nicht erkennen können als unsern Hei-
land und Seligmacher.

Wie wohl nun Gott sich also auf dreierlei Weise
geoffenbaret hat, so bekennen wir doch den dreieinigen
Gott: Vater, Sohn und heiligen Geist, als einen einzigen
wahren Gott, wenn wir von ihm reden als von dem
Schöpfer, Erhalter und Regierer der Welt, als von dem
Mensch gewordenen Erlöser der Menschheit und als von
dem heiligen Geiste, der in uns Wohnung machen will,
um uns wieder in die Gemeinschaft mit Gott und zu sei-
nen Kindern zu erheben.

III.

Von der Sündhaftigkeit des Menschen und der Erlösung durch Jesus Christum

glauben und bekennen wir, daß Gott die ersten Menschen
nach seinem Bilde und daher vollkommen und ohne Sün-
de erschaffen hat in rechtschaffener Gerechtigkeit und Hei-
ligkeit. — In diesem glückseligen Zustand aber sind die
Menschen nicht geblieben, sondern sie übertraten das
Gebot Gottes auf Versuchung des Teufels, sowie ihrer
eigenen Lust und sind dadurch, sie und alle ihre Nach-
kommen, in Sünde und Tod gefallen. „Denn durch einen
Menschen ist die Sünde in die Welt gekommen und der
Tod durch die Sünde, und ist also der Tod zu allen
Menschen hindurchgedrungen, die weil sie alle gesündigt
haben. Röm. 5, 12.

Aber wir glauben und bekennen auch, daß Gott in
seiner unergründlichen Liebe und Gnade uns Menschen
in der Sünde nicht hat wollen verderben lassen, sondern
uns durch die Menschwerdung, durch das Leben, Leiden,
Sterben, die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt seines Soh-
nes erlöst hat, sofern wir den Heiland als unsern Er-
löser und Seligmacher durch den wahren Glauben, wel-
cher in der Liebe tätig ist, annehmen und bekennen.

IV.

Vom freien Willen

glauben und bekennen wir, daß der Mensch einen freien
Willen hat, sich zu wählen das Gute oder das Böse, den
Tod oder das Leben, 5. Mose 30, 19. Die Gnadenwir-
kungen des heiligen Geistes wirken in dem Menschen nicht
mit Gewalt, sondern nur so weit, als der Mensch seinen
Willen Gott zur Befehrung übergibt, damit ihm die
Straf, das Gute zu wollen und zu vollbringen, geschenkt
werde. Der allmächtige Gott zwingt niemand mit Ge-
walt, bestimmt auch seinen durch unbedingte Gnadenwahl,
sondern läßt uns unseren freien Willen. Gott der Herr
kommt beständig mit seiner Gnade uns zuvor, reizet und
zieht uns zur Befehrung, zwinget uns aber nicht. Er
läßt uns die Freiheit, ob wir bei ihm bleiben oder von
ihm weichen wollen. Hes. 18, 24 und Ebr. 6, 5. 6. —
Aber Gott will nicht, daß jemand verloren werde, sondern
daß sich ein jeglicher zu ihm bekehre und selig werde,
Hes. 33.

V.

Von dem Heil in Christo und der Rechtfertigung durch den Glauben

glauben und bekennen wir, daß es nicht genug sei, eine
geschichtliche Kenntnis der Wahrheit in Bezug auf Chri-
stum zu haben, derselben heizupflichten und mit dem
Munde zu bekennen; denn solches alles kann stattfinden,
ohne daß das Herz erfaßt, gereinigt und erneuert wird,
sondern daß der wahre Glaube ein in der menschlichen
Seele von Gott gewirktes Licht ist, das uns den ver-
derbten Zustand unseres Herzens erkennen und in Chri-
sto, dem offenbarten Gottessohne, Hilfe, Heil und Frie-
den suchen lehrt. „Der Glaube ist eine gewisse Zuver-
sicht des, was man hoffet, und ein Nichtzweifeln an dem,
was man nicht siehet.“ Ebr. 11, 1. Er besteht in der

gläubigen Ergreifung und Aneignung Jesu Christi, als des alleinigen Retters von Sünde und Tod. Denn Christus ist uns von Gott gemacht zur Weisheit und zur Gerechtigkeit, zur Heiligung und zur Erlösung. Auch ist in keinem andern Heil, ist auch kein anderer Name den Menschen gegeben, darinnen wir sollen selig werden. Apgeich. 4, 12. Der Glaube aber muß mit herzlichster Buße verbunden sein; denn ohne Buße ist kein wahrer Glaube möglich. Die Buße zusammen mit dem gerechtfertigenden Glauben aber bildet die Befehrung.

Durch solchen Glauben erlangen wir die Rechtfertigung vor Gott. Denn um des stellvertretenden Leidens seines Sohnes Jesu Christi willen spricht Gott den bußfertigen Sünder, der Christum im Glauben als seinen Heiland annimmt, von Schuld und Strafe frei, und rechnet ihm Christi Verdienst und Gerechtigkeit als eigen zu, so daß er also aus freier Gnade gerecht und Erbe des ewigen Lebens wird. Einer solchen Rechtfertigung bedürfen wir alle: „denn wir sind allzumal Sünder und mangeln des Ruhms, den wir an Gott haben sollten.“ Römer 3, 23. Aber wir bekennen auch mit Paulus: „Wie nun durch Eines (Menschen) Sünde die Verdamnis über alle Menschen gekommen ist, also ist auch durch Eines Gerechtigkeit die Rechtfertigung des Lebens über alle Menschen gekommen.“ Röm. 5, 18. Niemand wird durch seine eigenen Werke vor Gott gerecht, sondern um des Verdienstes Jesu Christi, unseres Heilandes und Erlösers willen vergibt Gott dem gläubigen und bußfertigen Menschen alle seine Sünden aus Gnaden. „Er hat den, der von keiner Sünde wußte, für uns zur Sünde gemacht, auf daß wir würden in ihm die Gerechtigkeit, die vor ihm gilt.“ 2. Kor. 5, 21.

Diese Gnade Gottes, daß er uns todeswürdigen Sündern die Gerechtigkeit Jesu Christi, seines Sohnes, aus Gnaden zurechnen will, so wir an ihn glauben, erhebt und erweckt unser Herz zur größten Dankbarkeit und Gegenliebe, und solche Liebe treibt denn auch zu allem guten Werk. „Wenn wir von der Sünde frei und Gottes Knechte sind, so haben wir die Frucht, daß wir heilig werden. Das Ende aber ist das ewige Leben.“ Röm. 6, 22.

VI.

Von der Wiedergeburt

glauben und bekennen wir, daß, weil jeder Mensch von Natur zum Bösen geneigt ist, und alles, was vom Fleisch geboren wird, auch fleischlich gesinnt ist, wir neu geboren werden müssen, wenn wir in das Reich Gottes eingehen wollen nach Johannes 3. Diese Wiedergeburt wird von Gott selbst in uns gewirkt durch sein Wort und seinen Geist, wenn wir ihm gehorsam sind. Jak. 1, 18 und 1. Petri 1, 23.

Durch diese Wiedergeburt wird man geschickt, in guten Werken zu wandeln. Eph. 2, 10; denn man wird dadurch himmlisch gesinnt und der göttlichen Natur teilhaftig, daß man die guten Werke ohne allen Zwang mit Lust und Liebe übet und freiwillig nach Gottes Wohlgefallen lebet und würdevoll wandelt dem Herrn zu allem Gefallen, fruchtbar in allen guten Werken, Kol. 1, 10.

VII.

Von der Gemeinde Gottes

glauben und bekennen wir, daß sie aus solchen Gliedern besteht, die durch den wahren Glauben an Jesum und im Gehorsam gegen das heilige Evangelium von der sündigen Welt abgetreten sind und ihre Gemeinschaft haben durch den heiligen Geist mit Gott, dem Vater, und Jesu Christo, dem Haupt der Gemeinde. Und obwohl diese Gemeinde in der ganzen Welt zerstreut ist, so bekennen sich die Mitglieder derselben doch als Glieder eines Leibes, dessen Haupt Christus ist. Wenn gleich nicht alle, die sich zur Gemeinde Gottes bekennen, wahre Glieder des Leibes Christi sind, soll uns dies nicht nutzlos machen, sondern vielmehr antreiben, mitzuhelfen, daß alle gewonnen werden, am meisten aber, daß wir selbst wahre Glieder Jesu Christi und Mitglieder der unsichtbaren Gemeinde der Heiligen seien und bleiben mögen. Darum halten wir es auch für unsere christliche Pflicht, miteinander zusammenzukommen, das Wort Gottes zu predigen und das selbe anzuhören, — und andererseits auch dafür zu ar-

beiten, daß die frohe Botschaft hinausgetragen werde zu den nichtchristlichen Völkern; damit auch dort Glieder für die Gemeine Gottes gewonnen werden, gemäß dem Befehle des Herrn Jesu: „Gehet hin in alle Welt und lehret alle Völker und taufet sie im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des heiligen Geistes; und lehre sie halten alles, was ich euch befohlen habe.“ Matth. 28, 19. 20.

VIII.

Von dem Amt der Lehrer und Diener in der Gemeinde

glauben und bekennen wir nach der Lehre Christi und seiner Apostel, daß Gott seiner Gemeinde die Macht gegeben hat, Männer zu berufen, denen es als Haushaltern der mancherlei Gaben Gottes obliegt, das Wort Gottes zu predigen, die heilige Wassertaufe zu vollziehen, das heilige Abendmahl auszuteilen und die brüderlichen Beratungen zu leiten, damit hierdurch der Leib Christi erbaut und unterhalten werde.

Darum glauben wir, daß das Amt des Dienstes in der Gemeinde eine göttliche Ordnung ist, welche nach dem Vorbilde der Apostel unterhalten werden soll, und die Gemeinde hat sich bei Erwählung der Ältesten und Lehrer nach solchen Männern umzusehen, die ein gutes Zeugnis und solche Eigenschaften haben, wie sie in 1. Tim. 3, Titus 1 und 1. Petri 5 gefordert werden.

Auch halten wir an der Ordnung der Apostel fest, daß neben den Ältesten und Predigern auch Diakone oder Almosenpfleger in der Gemeinde bestellt werden, welche die Armen durch Almosen, die von milden Herzen beige-steuert werden, unterstützen, die Notdurft der Gemeindeglieder erfüllen, Barmherzigkeit üben mit Lust, auch sonst hilfreiche Hand in dem Dienst der Gemeinde bieten, damit dieselbe wohl regieret werde Apg. 6.

IX.

Von der heiligen Taufe

glauben und bekennen wir, daß sie eine heilige Ordnung Jesu Christi ist, welcher nach Matth. 28, 19—20 befohlen hat: „Gehet hin in alle Welt, lehret alle Völker und taufet sie im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des heiligen Geistes“; und Markus 16 spricht er: „Wer da glaubet und getauft wird, der wird selig werden, wer aber nicht glaubet, der wird verdammt werden.“ Diesen Befehl des Herrn haben die Apostel treu befolgt, die Buße zu Gott und den Glauben an Jesum gepredigt, und diejenigen, die das Wort Gottes gern annahmen, sind dann nach Bezeugung ihres Glaubens getauft worden. Darum taufen wir auch nur solche Personen, die den wahren Glauben an den Dreieinig Gott selbst bekennen.

Es ist aber die christliche Wassertaufe nicht nur eine Taufe der Buße, wie Johannes Taufe, sondern eine Taufe in Christi Tod; denn sie bezeichnet den wahren Gläubigen die Abwaschung der sündlichen Unreinigkeit der Seelen durch das vergossene Blut Jesu Christi. Sie ist eine Einverleibung in Christus und in seine Gemeinde und der Bund eines guten Gewissens mit Gott. Sie bezeugt das Begrabensein unsers alten Menschen in Christi Tod und verpflichtet die Getauften, sich mit Christo zu einem neuen, gehorsamen Leben und Wandel zu verbinden, nachzufolgen seinen Fußstapfen und zu tun, was er ihnen befohlen hat.

Hat Jesus Christus selbst, der ohne Sünde war, sich taufen lassen im Gehorsam gegen seinen himmlischen Vater und um alle Gerechtigkeit zu erfüllen, so verlangt er vielmehr von uns, die wir in Sünden empfangen und geboren sind, daß wir dieses Bundeszeichen an uns vollziehen lassen, und hat daran geknüpft die Versiegelung mit dem heiligen Geiste als der rechten Geistestaufe. Wer aber dieses Gebot Christi aus Eigendünkel verachtet und unterläßt, der handelt wider seinen Willen und kann in Wahrheit nicht sein Jünger sein.

X.

Vom heiligen Abendmahl

glauben und bekennen wir, daß der Herr Jesus diese heilige Handlung selbst eingesetzt und seinen Gläubigen zu unterhalten befohlen hat. Denn nach dem Essen des Osterlammes in der Nacht, da er verraten ward, nahm er das Brot, dankte, brach's und gab es seinen Jüngern und sprach: „Nehmet, esset, das ist mein Leib, der für

euch gegeben wird: solches tut zu meinem Gedächtnis.“ Desselbigengleichen nahm er auch den Kelch, dankte und gab ihn seinen Jüngern und sprach: „Dieser Kelch ist das neue Testament in meinem Blute; solches tut, so oft ihr's trinket, zu meinem Gedächtnis.“ 1. Kor. 11, 23—25.

Daß diese heilige Handlung aber oft und bis ans Ende der Tage von uns unterhalten werden soll, lehren uns die angeführten Worte unseres Heilandes: „Solches tut zu meinem Gedächtnis,“ und die Worte des Apostels Paulus „So oft ihr von diesem Brote esset, oder von diesem Kelche trinket, sollt ihr des Herrn Tod verkündigen, bis daß er kommt.“ 1. Kor. 11.

Von dem Segen in dem Genuße des heiligen Abendmahls aber glauben und bekennen wir, daß, gleichwie Christi heiliger Leib am Stamme des Kreuzes gebrochen und sein heiliges teures Blut geflossen ist zur Vergebung unserer Sünden, so ist der würdige, glaubensvolle Genuß des heiligen Abendmahls uns ein anschaulicher Beweis und eine kräftige Versicherung unserer Versöhnung mit Gott und der Vergebung unserer Sünden, der Gemeinschaft mit Christo und dem Vater und der brüderlichen Vereinigung aller gläubigen Glieder des Leibes Christi. „Denn ein Brot ist es, so sind wir viele ein Leib, die weil wir alle eines Brötes teilhaftig sind.“ 1. Kor. 10, 17.

Nur wahrhaft Gläubigen und Bußfertigen, die ein ernstes Verlangen in sich tragen, mit ihrem Herrn und Heilande Jesu Christo im Glauben und in der Liebe sich aufs neue zu vereinigen, sowie in herzlicher Liebe auch denen zu vergeben, die sich an ihnen versündigt haben, und nach Röm. 12, 18 mit der Gemeinde und allen Menschen in Frieden leben, kann das Mahl des Herrn wirklich gesegnet sein. Darum ist nach 1. Kor. 11, 27—29 eine vorherige, ernste Selbstprüfung erforderlich, wenn wir nicht dem Gerichte Gottes verfallen wollen.

XI.

Vom Fußwaschen

glauben wir, daß der Herr Jesus Christus, unser Heiland, nachdem er das Abendmahl eingesezt hatte, seinen Jüngern die Füße wusch. Nach Joh. 13.

Wir haben dazu zu bemerken, daß der Herr Jesus hiemit hat vorstellen wollen die Notwendigkeit der täglichen Reinigung von Sünden, und wie er aus lauter Liebe sich erniedrigt und Knechtsgestalt angenommen hat, um uns von Sünden zu erlösen und zu reinigen, und uns also gelehrt, daß wir ihm nachfolgen und in Demut und Liebe uns auch untereinander dienen sollen.

XII.

Vom christlichen Ehestande

glauben und bekennen wir, daß derselbe von Gott im Paradiese an Adam und Eva eingesezt ist, daß Mann und Weib einander Gehilfen seien zur Seligkeit. Gott hat ihn aber dergestalt eingesezt, daß ein Mann und ein Weib in der Ehe sein sollen. Diesen Ehestand hat auch Jesus Christus bestätigt, wenn er nach Matth. 19, 45 sagt: „Der den Menschen am Anfang gemacht hat, der machte, daß ein Mann und ein Weib sein sollte, und sprach: „Darum wird ein Mensch seinen Vater und seine Mutter verlassen und an seinem Weibe hängen, und werden die zwei ein Fleisch sein.“ Solche Personen, die in den Stand der heiligen Ehe treten, sollen frei sein von ehelichen Gelübden dritten gegenüber, nicht zu nahe in Blutsverwandtschaft miteinander stehen und gleichen Glaubens und Gottesdienstes sein. 3 Mose 18 und 20, 1. Kor. 7. Der Ehestand ist ein heiliger Stand; darum soll die Ehe nach christlicher Weise und in christlicher Ordnung geschlossen und geführt werden, und sie darf nicht geschieden werden; denn Christus sagt: „Was Gott zusammengefügt hat, das soll der Mensch nicht scheiden,“ Matth. 19, 6; und ferner B. 9: „Wer sich von seinem Weibe scheidet, (es sei denn um der Hurerei willen) und freiet eine andere, der bricht die Ehe, und wer die Abgeschiedene freiet, der bricht auch die Ehe.“

Jedoch ist niemand gezwungen, in den Stand der Ehe zu treten, und wer lieber im ledigen Stande bleiben will, der tut nach Pauli Lehre wohl, 1. Kor. 7, 32. 34. 37, wenn es nur in der rechten christlichen Freiheit geschieht, deren Schranken Gottes heilige Verordnungen sind.

XIII.

Von dem Amt der Obrigkeit

glauben und bekennen wir, daß sie eine göttliche Ordnung ist, der wir gehorsam und untertan sein sollen in allen Dingen, die nicht streiten wider Gottes Wort. Denn der Apostel Paulus spricht zu den Römern Kap. 13: „Jedermann sei untertan der Obrigkeit, die Gewalt über ihn hat; denn es ist keine Obrigkeit, ohne von Gott verordnet. Wer sich nun wider die Obrigkeit sezt, der widerstrebet Gottes Ordnung; die aber widerstreben, werden über sich ein Urteil empfangen. Denn die Gewaltigen sind nicht den guten Werken, sondern den bösen zu fürchten.“ Und Petrus sagt 1. Petri 2, 13—14: „Seid untertan aller menschlichen Ordnung um des Herrn willen, es sei dem Könige als dem Obersten, oder den Hauptleuten als den Gesandten von ihm zur Rache über die Uebeltäter und zu Liebe den Frommen.“ Auch sind wir schuldig, für sie zu beten nach dem Befehl des Apostels Paulus, wenn er an Timotheus schreibt: „So ermahne ich nun, daß man vor allen Dingen zuerst tue Witte, Gebet, Fürbitte und Danksagung für alle Menschen, für die Könige und für alle Obrigkeit, auf daß wir ein ruhiges Leben führen mögen in aller Gottseligkeit und Ehrbarkeit.“ 1. Tim. 2, 1. 2.

XIV.

Vom Eidschwören

glauben und bekennen wir, daß den Vätern des alten Bundes zugelassen war, in dem Namen des Herrn zu schwören und dabei befohlen, keinen falschen Eid zu tun; aber der Stifter des neuen Bundes, Jesus fordert nach Matth. 5, 33—37 ausdrücklich jedes Schwören zu meiden, wenn er dort spricht: „Ihr habt gehört, daß zu den Alten gesagt ist: Du sollst keinen falschen Eid tun, sondern sollst Gott deinen Eid halten. Ich aber sage euch, daß ihr allerdings nicht schwören sollt, weder bei dem Himmel, denn er ist Gottes Stuhl, noch bei der Erde, denn sie ist seiner Füße Schemel, noch bei Jerusalem, denn sie ist eines großen Königs Stadt. Auch sollst du nicht bei deinem Haupte schwören, denn du vermagst nicht ein einziges Haar weiß zu machen. Eure Rede sei: Ja, ja, nein, nein; was darüber ist, das ist vom Uebel. Aus diesen Worten unseres Herrn Jesu erkennen wir aufs deutlichste, daß nicht nur das leichtsinnige Schwören im gewöhnlichen Leben, sondern jegliches Eidschwören, welche Form es auch haben mag, verboten ist; was auch Jak. 5, 12 bestätigt wird. Was aber von uns anstatt des Eides mit einem gewissenhaften „Ja“ oder „Nein“ bezeugt wird, soll auch in Wahrheit also bestehen. Wir sollen stets und überall die Wahrheit sprechen und die Lüge verabscheuen, damit wir nicht dem schrecklichen Urteil verfallen, das den Lügern in Offbg. 21, 8 zuerkannt wird. Niemand möge denken, daß nur die gerichtlichen Eidschwüre verboten sind, vielmehr sollen wir uns jeglichen Schwörens und Fluchens enthalten um der Seelen Seligkeit willen, denn Jesus sagt Matth. 12, 36: „Die Menschen müssen Rechenschaft geben am jüngsten Gericht von einem jeglichen unnützen Wort, das sie geredet haben.“

XV.

Von der Feindesliebe und Wehrlosigkeit

glauben und bekennen wir, daß Christen, als der Welt abgestorbene und aus Gott geborene Menschen, in der Welt keine Rache üben, nach der Lehre Jesu, ihres Meisters, wenn er in Matth. 5, 38. 39 spricht: „Ihr habt gehört, daß zu den Alten gesagt ist: Auge um Auge, Zahn um Zahn; Ich aber sage euch, daß ihr nicht widerstreben sollt dem Uebel, sondern so jemand dir einen Streich gibt auf deinen rechten Waden, dem biete den andern auch dar.“ Und der Apostel ermahnt die Römer 12, 18—21: „Ist es möglich, so viel an euch ist, so habt mit allen Menschen Frieden. Rächet euch selber nicht, meine Liebsten, sondern gebet Raum dem Zorn, denn es steht geschrieben: die Rache ist mein, ich will vergelten, spricht der Herr. So nun deinen Feind hungert, so speise ihn, dürstet ihn, so tränke ihn. Wenn du das tust, so wirst du feurige Kohlen auf sein Haupt sammeln. Laß dich nicht das Böse überwinden, sondern überwinde das Böse mit Gutem.“ Dies fordert auch Petrus von den wahren

Christen, wenn es 1. Petri 3, 9 heißt: „Vergeltet nicht Böses mit Bösem, oder Scheltworte mit Scheltworte, sondern dagegen segnet,“ — und derselbe Apostel weist uns auf das Beispiel des segnenden Christus hin, „welcher nicht schalt, da er gescholten ward, nicht drohete, da er litt; er stellte es aber dem anheim, der da recht richtet,“ 1. Petri 2, 23. Diese Anordnungen der heiligen Schrift zeigen ausdrücklich, daß wir an unsern Nächsten in keinem Falle Rache nehmen dürfen, weder in Gedanken, noch in Worten und Werken, sondern wir sollen lieber Unrecht leiden als Unrecht tun, und so uns solches widerfähret, mit Wohltun unsern Nächsten entgegenreten, dann werden wir Kinder sein unseres Vaters im Himmel. Daraus folgt, daß wir uns eines jeden feindseligen Streites mit dem Nächsten sorgfältig zu enthalten haben, und daß auch für uns das Töten von Menschen im Kriege unzulässig ist; denn die Waffen unserer Mitterschaft sind nicht fleischlich, sondern mächtig vor Gott. 2. Kor. 10, 4. Auch streben wir durch unser Wehrlossein nach dem im Wort der Weissagung angekündigten Friedensreiche, wo man die Schwerter zu Pflugscharen und die Spieße zu Sicheln machen und nicht mehr kriegen lernen wird.

XVI.

Von der christlichen Gemeindegucht

glauben und bekennen wir, daß nach dem Befehl Jesu und der Lehre seiner Apostel solche Glieder in der Gemeinde, welche in groben Sünden und Werken des Fleisches leben, einer Gemeindegucht zu unterwerfen sind, nach Matth. 18, 15—17: „Sündiget aber dein Bruder an dir, so gehe hin und strafe ihn zwischen dir und ihm allein. Höret er dich, so hast du deinen Bruder gewonnen. Höret er dich nicht, so nimm noch einen oder zwei zu dir, auf daß alle Sache bestehet auf zweier oder dreier Zeugen Mund; höret er die nicht, so sage es der Gemeinde. Höret er die Gemeinde nicht, so halte ihn als einen Heiden und Zöllner.“ Will dieses schon, wenn ein Bruder gegen den andern sich versündigt hat, so ist eine Anwendung der Gemeindegucht um so notwendiger, wenn es sich um grobe, öffentlich Aergernis erregende Sünden handelt, Gal. 5, 19—21.

In diesen Fällen ist entweder eine sofortige Absonderung von der Gemeinde erforderlich nach 1. Kor. 5, 13 und 2. Thess. 3, 7, oder wenn bei dem Betreffenden aufrichtige Reue wahrzunehmen ist, soll doch wenigstens eine Wortstrafe vor versammelter Gemeinde geschehen nach 1. Tim. 5, 20. Mit der Absonderung ist die Meidung der Gestraften verbunden nach 1. Kor. 5 und 2. Thess. 3. — Jedoch sollen wir uns hüten, daß unter dem Schein der Meidung sich Haß und Feindschaft einschleiche, 2. Thess. 3, 15. Wenn ein abgeordnetes Mitglied aber seine begangene Sünde erkennt, bekennt und rechtschaffene Früchte der Buße beweist, dann halten wir es für unsere christliche Pflicht, dasselbe wieder in unsere Gemeinschaft aufzunehmen, 2. Kor. 2, 6—10.

XVII.

Von der Auferstehung der Toten

glauben und bekennen wir, daß dem Menschen gesetzt ist einmal zu sterben und darnach das Gericht, Ebr. 9, 27, und daß alle Menschen, die gestorben sind, oder noch künftig sterben werden, dereinst wieder leben und vom Tode auferstehen werden. Von dieser Auferstehung der Toten, beide, der Frommen und der Gottlosen, der Gerechten und Ungerechten sagt der Herr Jesu Joh. 5, 28. 29: „Es kommt die Stunde, in welcher alle, die in den Gräbern sind, werden seine Stimme hören; und werden hervorgehen, die da Gutes getan haben, zur Auferstehung des Lebens, die aber Uebels getan haben, zur Auferstehung des Gerichts.“

Der Apostel Paulus sagt 1. Thess. 4, 16. 17, daß, wenn der Herr Jesus mit einem Feldgeschrei und der Stimme des Erzengels und mit der Posaune Gottes herniederkommen wird vom Himmel, dann die Toten in Christo zuerst auferstehen werden. Darnach wir, die wir leben und übrig bleiben, werden zugleich mit denselben hingerückt werden in den Wolken, dem Herrn entgegen in der Luft, und werden also bei dem Herrn sein allezeit. Dieses ist die erste Auferstehung, die bei der zunächst zu erwartenden Wiederkunft des Herrn sich vollzieht, während die allgemeine Auferstehung am Ende der Tage erfolgt.

XVIII.

Von dem jüngsten Gericht

glauben und bekennen wir, daß dasselbe am Ende der Tage unfehlbar kommen wird. Es wird alsdann der Sohn Gottes sitzen auf dem Stuhl seiner Herrlichkeit und werden vor ihm alle Völker versammelt werden, um Rechenschaft abzulegen von allem Tun und Lassen auf Erden in Gedanken, Worten und Werken, und wird sie voneinander scheiden, wie ein Hirt die Schafe von den Böcken scheidet und wird die Schafe zu seiner Rechten stellen und die Böcke zu seiner Linken. Dann wird der König sagen zu denen zu seiner Rechten: „Kommet her, ihr Gesegneten des Vaters, ererbet das Reich, das euch bereitet ist von Anbeginn der Welt“ (Matth. 25, 34). Dann wird er sagen zu denen zu seiner Linken: „Gehet hin von mir, ihr Verfluchten, in das ewige Feuer, das bereitet ist dem Teufel und seinen Engeln“ (V. 41). „Und sie werden in die ewige Pein gehen, aber die Gerechten in das ewige Leben“ (V. 46).

HISTORIC ARTICLES OF FAITH

of the EVANGELICAL MENNONITE CHURCH

North America

1954

Article I

Of God the Father

We believe with our heart and confess with our mouth, with all godly fathers of old, who have lived from the beginning of the world, and also with the apostles of Lord Jesus, and with all holy men of God after them, in an eternal, incomprehensible God, who has created in six days: the heaven, the earth, the visible and the invisible substance. On the seventh day he rested according to Genesis 1. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God. Hebrews 11:3, and further spoken by the apostle, that, all things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear. Through His mighty word He keeps, governs and bears all things; for He is a righteous, holy, perfect, incomprehensible, spiritual being. John 4:24. He exists in Himself and does not require any help. He is not being tended by men as one who is in need, since He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, according to Acts 17. He is without beginning and without end, a Lord of lords and a King of kings, over all of us and in all of us. Revelation 17. He is a terrible God and a consuming fire. Revelation 4. He is also righteous, holy and merciful, full of love, mercy and peace. But He is a God, whom nobody can see for He dwells in the light, which no man can approach unto, according to 1 Timothy 6. The heaven is His throne, and the earth is His footstool. Isaiah 66. He is in all places, sees and hears, and knows all things, and no man can think or plan anything in his heart, which He does not know. In Hebrews 4 we read: All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. This all-knowing God will not give His glory to another, nor His praise to graven images. Isaiah 42. He is the only Lord, and nobody else. All must obey His commands. His word is true and His command is strong. When He speaks, it happens, and when He commands, it is there. Therefore every knee should bow before Him, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Thus we should love Him with all our strength, fear and serve Him and be obedient to Him.

Article II

Of the Son of God

We believe in and confess also one Son of God, called "the Word" through whom the world and all things have been made. In the beginning was the Word, and all things were made by Him. John 1:1. The apostle says in Hebrews 1: God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in the last days spoken unto us by his Son,—by whom also he made the worlds. David also says: By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. And Paul says: God created all things by Jesus Christ. Ephesians 3:9. Of this Son of God we believe and confess, according to the testimony of the Scriptures, for

when man through his transgressions and sin fell into eternal death, God who loved man was merciful and gave his only begotten Son, who was one with Him, and sent him to us. He became man, was quite poor, and was made in the likeness of men. Philippians 2. He has taken upon himself our burden of sin and paid for it according to Ephesians 5. Through his bitter suffering and death on the cross he has reconciled us with God. He was taken from the cross, laid into a tomb, arose on the third day, and while they beheld was taken up. Acts 1. There he sits on the right hand of God and has all power in heaven and in earth according to Matthew 28. He will come again at the end of the world to judge and hand out the reward according to each and everyone's works. Man is given no other name whereby he can be saved, but through Jesus Christ, according to Acts 4. Therefore every knee should bow before him, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord. Philippians 2.

Article III

Of the Holy Spirit

We believe in and confess also one Holy Spirit, who has come from the Father, and who is the right Comforter, with power from above. John 15. This Spirit leads in all truth, and as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. Romans 8. All those who have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his. And those who do not follow this Spirit have no part in him. Through this Holy Spirit the believer examines all things, even the depth of divinity, for he has all power, oversees all things, and goes through all understanding, pure, and most subtle spirits, according to Wisdom of Solomon 7. Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. 2. Peter 2:1. Therefore he is worthy of divine honour, but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, has never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. Mark 3:29. Through this Spirit all believers fellowship together. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Romans 8:16. Therefore we worship and give praise and honour to Him, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, in all eternity. Amen.

Article IV

Of the Trinity of God

We believe and confess, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is one all-powerful God, according to John's testimony: For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three agree in one. 1. John 5:7. Not only united, but it is one God. For as God is an incomprehensible God, so this would be incomprehensible and yet believable. The Holy Spirit comes from the Father and is being sent by the Father and Son. These three are undivided as is clearly shown in the conversation Jesus has with Philip, when Jesus says: He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? Or else believe me for the very works' sake. John 14. In John 12 Christ says: He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. In John 10 verse 30 we read: I and my Father are one. In this sense Paul also wishes the congregations the peace of God with the following words: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

Article V

Of the Incarnation of the Son of God

We believe in the incarnation of the Son of God according to Luke 1. When the angel greeted Mary, she was troubled at his saying, but he said to her: Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel: How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. To Joseph the angel said: That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. Matthew 1:20. Therefore He is not of the flesh and blood of his mother, for John says, the Word was made flesh. So, the Word, or the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, who was with God in the beginning, and who was God has been made flesh. John supports this in his First Epistle, chapter 1, when he says: That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life. Have they seen or handled anything else but his human body? We read in John 20:27: Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. That was of the Word of Life. Therefore, we say, that He was with God, and He also was God when He came to redeem the human race. He was sent by God to the world, conceived in Mary by the Holy Ghost, was made flesh and man, and took upon him the form of a servant, according to Philippians 2. He did no sin. 1 Peter 2:22. He was sent into the world by his Father, departed from the world again, and went to his Father. John 16. We shall thank and praise Him for humbling himself for us in this fashion.

Article VI

Of the Church of God

We believe in and confess a Church of God. God had a Church or a chosen people, whom he loved, from the beginning of the world, and will have one up to the end of the world. It had its beginning with Adam in Paradise, and later on the people of God, who remained stedfast to the end, were chosen to be his very own. He made a covenant with Abraham and his seed after him. Genesis 17. Ezra also speaks about this and says: Oh, ruling Lord, Thou hast gathered thyself a people, out of great nations, whom thou hast shown favour and given the law. That was the Church of the Old Testament. When the Lord Jesus came into this world, he sent his servants to all parts of the world to preach the gospel to all nations, and thereby create the Church of the New Testament. To all those, who repented and believed in the gospel of Jesus Christ, he gave power to become the Sons of God, as stated in John 1. Together they have one faith and one baptism. Ephesians 4:5. They have been baptized to one body, and have become one with God in heaven in one faith through Christ, so that he may dwell in their hearts, according to Ephesians 3:17. Paul says in Ephesians 5:27: That he might present to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. And such a corporate fellowship of saints, without respect of person, is

together one heart and one soul. Through Jesus Christ they will bear with each other in love, and will pray for each other to God. That is the Church, which God has chosen himself out of all nations and tongues according to Acts 1. That means all those who fear and love God and walk before him according to the Scriptures. Jesus Christ is the head and cornerstone of this Church. Thus we have a righteous Church or fellowship of saints, which the Lord has kept at all times in the midst of this wicked generation. May the Lord Jesus keep this Church according to his promise up to the end of the world. Matthew 28.

Article VII

Of the Character of the Church of God

We believe and confess that the Church of God should at all times be recognizable in its scriptural faith, doctrine and life. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Galatians 5:6. This is wrought in man's heart in grace through God's word, which is the regeneration to an inheritance incorruptible according to 1 Peter 1:3 and 20. So all true members of the Church of God must bear fruit, and show their whole life is based on the doctrine of the gospel. However, the Lord Jesus says: Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Matthew 15:13. For: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Matthew 7:21. Paul says: Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. Philippians 2:14, 15. Then too, the Church of God should at all times be recognizable in this, that she withdraws itself from all those, who walk disorderly and not after the tradition, which we have received from God. And in 2. Corinthians 6, we read: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers—Wherefore come out from among them—and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you. And further the Lord Jesus himself warns us to beware of false prophets, who come to us in sheeps clothing to either add to or take away from His word or command. Matthew 7. Those who have been truly sent by God, will abide with the wholesome word and doctrine. John 3:34. Then the Church of God must be recognizable in its love it should have among themselves and for one another, so that nobody would carelessly or even wantonly grieve the other. The Lord Jesus says: A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another; as I have loved you,—By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. John 13. And, By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 1 John 5:2.

Article VIII

Of the Teachers and Deacons of the Church

We believe and confess that the Lord Jesus and his apostles after him have appointed in the Church of God, pastors, teachers and deacons. They are to be elected in the fear of the Lord, of which we find instruction and examples. The Lord Jesus himself appointed twelve apostles, then seventy others, and sent them out to teach, according to Matthew 10 and Luke 10. And the apostles appointed Matthias by lot, to take the place of the fallen Judas. Acts 1. And when the disciples became many and the widows were neglected in the daily ministrations, the Church chose seven dea-

cons for these necessities of life. Acts 6. Even Paul writes to Titus in chapter 1: For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city. Of the character of an elder or a preacher Paul teaches the following: He is to be the husband of one wife, sober, moderate, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, blameless, not greedy of filthy lucre. His children should be in subjection with all gravity. He should be patient, not a brawler, not covetous, not double-tongued, one that ruleth well his own house, and who holds the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Those who have been elected, should first be proved, and then allowed to serve, if found blameless. The elder should not be a novice, lest he be lifted up with pride. Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. 1 Timothy 3. Thus for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body (the Church) of Christ. Ephesians 4:12. In preparation for such an election, the Church should have come near to God in fasting and prayer; yes, in true humbleness, so that the Lord, who knows all hearts, would reveal whom he has chosen for this important office and service. Acts 1. Then the Church can firmly trust that God will, through his power and action of the Holy Spirit, direct the hearts in such a way, that the election will come out for the good of the Church.

Article IX

Of Baptism

We believe and confess that the Lord Jesus has ordered his believers to baptize with water on the confession of faith and the remission of their sins. For Jesus says himself in Matthew 28 and Mark 16. Go ye into all the world, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. In Acts 2 we read about the observance of this command. When, on the day of Pentecost, they were all with one accord in one place, the Holy Ghost was poured out over them, where, out of every nation under heaven the multitude came together. Then Peter preached the faith in Jesus to this multitude, and forcefully proved that the Lord Jesus was the long-promised redeemer of mankind. They were pricked in their heart and said: Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them: Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. So these were not baptized against their will, or without faith, but only after their conversion and on the confession of their faith. In the same way Philip interpreted the Scriptures to the eunuch from Ethiopia. He said to Philip: What doth hinder me to be baptized? Philip said: If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. He said: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. They went down both into the water and Philip baptized him. The apostles baptized only those, who were first taught, those, who were converted from their sins, and who believed in Jesus, and themselves desired baptism. Somebody might ask: What is baptism for and what does it mean? Here is the answer: Baptism gives testimony that our sins have been washed away by the blood of Jesus. Just like the water is being used to cleanse the body, the blood of Jesus purges our souls from dead works to serve the living God. Hebrews 9:14 Peter says: Baptism doth also now save us not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God. 1 Peter 3:21. Paul also says: Know ye not, that so many of us as

were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:3, 4.

Article X

Of the Lord's Supper

We believe and confess that the Lord Jesus commanded his believers to observe the Lord's Supper to the remembrance of his bitter suffering and death for the lost. Just as the Lord Jesus suffered himself to be baptized by John in the Jordan, nobody who loves him, ought to deem himself to be wiser and disregard baptism. Matthew 3:15. In the same way he observed the Lord's Supper with his disciples. Then he took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Matthew 26. This do in remembrance of me. Paul says in 1. Corinthians 11: As often as ye drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. But to eat his flesh and drink his blood cannot be done except spiritually for the cleansing of our souls. The bread and wine, which we partake of in the Lord's Supper, shall serve all believers as a remembrance, that is, all those who partake of it shall keep the unity of the spirit like the unity of the loaf of bread made of many kernels, and as the unity of the wine made of many grapes, they shall come to one faith and knowledge of the Son of God. Ephesians 4:3. There would be much more to say about the observance of the Lord's Supper, but we shall close this article with thanksgiving, because, through grace, we have been reconciled with God, having therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Hebrews 10:19.

Article XI

Of the Washing of the Saints' Feet

We believe and confess that the Lord Jesus has taught his own a washing of the feet according to John 13. When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, to betray him; Jesus was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Had Jesus not washed away our sins with his blood, we would have no part with him. But since he was willing to wash us in his blood through his suffering, he wanted to show his disciples and us that this was the only way of having a part with him. The washing of the feet is, therefore, a very remarkable remembrance of the cleansing from our sins. It is also a command of the Lord, when he says: He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet. John 13:10. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. John 13:14, 15. Thus the washing of the

feet is a token of remembrance of the cleansing from our sins through the blood of Jesus. 1 John 1:7. It is to be a humble act of kindness and a fellowship of believers, whereby they show that they are of one mind, have the same love, and not be vainly ambitious to provoke one another to hate, but rather to love. It further means to hold dear and honour those of the same religion, reverence each other, and let each esteem other better than themselves. Romans 12 and Philippians 2. At this washing of the feet and the reverencing of one another it is suitable that we observe the kind exhortation of the apostle Paul in Romans 16:16, where he says: Salute one another with an holy kiss. Peter also says: Greet ye one another with a kiss of love. 1 Peter 5:14.

Article XII

Of Good Works

We believe that an upright Christian is bound to bring forth good works, but not the way of the scribes and the Pharisees, who made broad their phylacteries, and wide the borders of their garments, to make a pious show before the people, but inwardly they were full of hypocrisy and vice. Matthew 23. They liked to be seen by the people when they gave their alms, and wanted to be praised for their zealous religious exercises. But Christ said: In vain they do worship me. Matthew 15:9. And in Matthew 6:2, they have their reward. Therefore Christ says: That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. And, therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. Do well and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest. Luke 6:35. In the same way one should not stop giving alms, showing mercy to all those in need, for it is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20:35. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. Matthew 6:3,4. One should not think it possible to earn something from God by doing good works. Oh, no, for Christ says: when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. Luke 17:10. For we are not those who can do good things in ourselves, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Philippians 2:13. Therefore, we should stay close to God in all humility, so that he can lead and guide us in all truth.

Article XIII

Of Matrimony

We believe in and confess a state of matrimony, which God instituted in paradise, when he created a man and a woman, whom he joined together and spoke a blessing over them. Genesis 1. But when men fell away from God and took many wives, the Lord Jesus finally came and said: Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. Matthew 19. Jesus restored matrimony again to its first order. The apostles also have taught on detailed grounds, that the state of matrimony is to be between two believers, who shall marry in the Lord, and shall, notwithstanding, be saved if they continue in faith and love and holiness with sobriety. 1 Timothy 2. Marriage is honourable in all and the bed undefiled. Hebrews 13. Matrimony in the Christian Church is between two believers, who have been baptized to one body, and born again by God, and these marry in

the Lord. 1 Cor. 7:39. Divorce was practised in the time of Moses, which the Lord Jesus completely abolished again with the prohibition, when he says in Matthew 19:6: What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They are not to be divorced. If one dies, the other one is free to marry whom he will, but they are not to be too nearly related according to the laws, which the Lord God gave through Moses. Leviticus 18. Paul confirms this with the following words: Only in the Lord. 1. Corinthians 7:39. According to this, marriage should not be entered into thoughtlessly, or even shamelessly, and in carnal desire, but in the fear of the Lord with thoughtful consideration of the Holy Scriptures, and obey the lines of consanguinity instead of frivolously overstepping them. We believe, that, according to the Scriptures, it is not permissible to marry outside the church except that such a party join the church and become one with it, for Paul says: Be ye not unequally yoked. 2 Corinthians 6. If it is done by somebody, we have a commandment from God in Numbers 15: The soul that doeth ought presumptuously, shall be cut off from among his people. In the New Testament this means the evangelical ban with shunning. But we heartily wish, that God would keep each one from following the instincts, and not leave the church of God, or love the world again. 1 John 2:17 and 19.

Article XIV

Of Evangelical Excommunication

We believe in and confess an evangelical excommunication of the offending members to keep the church of God pure from all ungodly, unrighteous, and carnal life. What procedure we are to follow is taught first of all by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18, when he says: Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. The Jews would have no fellowship with them, so Jesus wants to show even us how to avoid the excommunication in love and duty. We find that they had no fellowship with them, whether it be in eating or drinking or any other dealings. John 4:9. They were not even allowed into the temple according to Acts 21:28 and Ezekiel 44. If anyone sin wilfully, thus falling into gross sin, there is to be no admonition, for it is a sin unto death and is not to be prayed for. 1 John 5 and 2. Thessalonians 3:6, 14. Wanton and depraved members should be cut off and put away without any previous admonishing. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump according to 1 Corinthians 5 and Galatians 5:9. The church has to see to it that no root of bitterness spring up to cause trouble and thereby defile many. Hebrews 12. The members of the church shall have no company with the banned members, so that the latter may be ashamed. 2. Thessalonians 3. Since the Lord has given order for edification and not for destruction, no one can be excluded from this, neither husband nor wife, neither parents nor children. 2 Corinthians 10. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. 2 Thessalonians 3:15. And when he repenteth, there shall be more joy in heaven, than over those which need no repentance. Luke 15. Their sins and transgressions shall not be remembered anymore. Isaiah 43:25. After sufficient repentance such a person shall be taken into the church again, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 2 Corinthians 2:7.

Article XV**Of the Free Will of Man**

We believe and confess, that man has the choice to do good or evil. Deuteronomy 30. We also read in Jeremiah 21:8, Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death. In the above references we see that God set life or death before man, and that man has the ability to either choose or reject good, as we see in our first parents in paradise. On the basis of this free will by which man may decide himself whether he wants to fear God, God will judge the world and pass a just sentence over man on that day of judgement. Man's soul is drawn towards the good to overcome the evil in himself by the spirit of God. This is only by the grace of God. Except by the grace of God we are not able to do anything good, as was said to Job: Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart? Job 38:36. So this comes from above from the father of light who does not want death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Ezekiel 33. Even the apostle Paul testifies that God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2. Now, since even the Almighty God does not force anybody to follow the good, it would be much less fitting for anybody to force a believer with strictness or with the power of the government to follow the good. And since we have nothing of ourselves, we should give all honour to God and thank him for his unspeakable grace and for the good he does in us.

Article XVI**Of Revenge and Non-Resistance**

We believe and confess that born again Christians are dead to the world and, according to the teaching of Jesus, their master, they should take no revenge. Matthew 5. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Matthew 5:37-39. Not rendering evil for evil. 1 Peter 3:9. Paul says in Romans 12:19-21: Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. In Matthew 5 our dear Saviour says: Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? In 2 Corinthians 10:3, 4 we read: For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God. According to 1 Corinthians 6, we deem it wrong to go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? We have here no lasting abode but seek for the future where our possession and citizenship shall be everlasting, even in heaven.

Article XVII**About Swearing an Oath**

We believe and confess that a born again Christian must at all times be truthful. Thus it will not be necessary for him to strengthen his yes or no with any further words because when he says yes it must be

yes and when he says no it must be no. Otherwise he shows that his yes and no cannot be believed and that he has turned away from the simple truth. A Christian should not swear because Jesus says himself: Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; nor by the earth; nor by thy head. Matthew 5. After this manner we should strive to act at all times, so that we would live in this light at all times just like God is a light, and that no falseness and deceitfulness be found in us, for lying and deceiving are of the devil. And all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. Revelation 21. Therefore one must walk in the truth before God and man, and not swear, even as the apostle James says: But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation. James 5:12. Should somebody want to force us to swear, then we should be more obedient to God than to man. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Psalm 97:11.

Article XVIII**Of Office and Government**

We believe and confess that God has at all times and in all countries ordained government. Over Israel he was Lord himself. Deuteronomy 30. We recognize the authorities as the servants of God and believe it a good arrangement of God to have the cities and kingdoms governed, since not all people allow themselves to be reproved and governed by the Spirit of God. God has ordained government to protect the good and to punish the wicked to keep order in this world, until he finally will summon everybody to judgement. However, our Savior says: Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you. Matthew 20. Peter also admonishes the believers and says: Dearly beloved, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conduct honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. And further: Honour all men. Fear God. Honour the king. 1 Peter 2. One does not find any teaching in the New Testament that the believers are to help govern in any wordly office. But to the contrary Christ says: My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, but now is my kingdom not from hence. John 18:36. Nobody shall dare to resist the government, for such a one, says Paul, shall know that he resisteth the ordinance of God. Romans 13. We are also bound to pay taxes and duties willingly and to obey and be ready to every good work. To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. Titus 3. All praiseworthy authority, which governs well will be rewarded by God. The Lord preserves every good deed as a signet ring and as his eyeball. But we, beloved, are bound to pray for their well being.

Article XIX**Of the Resurrection**

We believe and confess that it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement. Hebrews

9. This sinning flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. Therefore Paul says: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. 1 Corinthians 15:44. And further: Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Then the Lord Jesus also says in John 5: For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. This agrees with what Daniel says in Chapter 12. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Then according to 1 Thessalonians 4: For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Even plagued Job consoled himself with this resurrection, and says: For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. Job 19. From the books of Moses and the Psalms the Lord Jesus proved to the Sadducees, who believed in no resurrection, that the dead would rise again. Even John in Revelation 20 says: And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. Finally, we say with Paul: For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4.

Article XX

Of the Last Judgement

We believe and confess a last judgement which will be held on the last day, when God will resurrect the dead. The Son of God, who has come to redeem all, who believe in him, shall be the judge. He shall come to judge all who have ever lived and who live at the time, and will give them their reward according to their works and faith, good or bad. Those who have been obedient to God and his word will then be full of great joy, but those who have been disobedient will fall into great fear and remorse. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven. Matthew 24. He is near and shall come unawares, yes, as a thief in the night. Luke 21. This shall be the day, of which the prophet Malachi prophesies, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up. Malachi 4:1. In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up. 2 Peter 3. Considering this faithfully we might ask ourselves, whether we have prepared ourselves by honest repentance and prayers to God, for this great day, which shall surely come. Or does our conscience still charge us with one thing or another? Therefore let nobody neglect it until it is too late and the trumpet shall sound. No, today, if ye will hear his voice; let us hear, and not harden our hearts. Hebrews 3. So that we would be alert in the last hour, and not live too confidently, as it was in the days of Noe and Sodom, as the Lord Jesus has prophesied, that it shall be that way at his coming. Luke 17. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be

overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Luke 21:34, 35. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgement upon all. Jude 14. The prophet Daniel has also seen in a vision, till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgement was set, and the books were opened. Daniel 7. Beloved, there the books of our conscience shall be opened, our wanton sins, the hidden disgraces and abominations of our lives shall be clearly set before our eyes. Those, beloved who have to the best of their ability, served God, kept his word, and lived a life of holiness and righteousness, shall then be surrounded with unspeakable joy, and be like them that dream. Psalm 126. But, on the other hand, those, who have not taken his word to heart, but have enjoyed this world in the pleasures of the flesh and lived in many evil lusts, shall fall into indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish. Romans 2:8. All people, who have ever lived both small and great, the high and the low, will have to come before the great judgement of God. The sea and the earth shall give up their dead, so they may all be judged out of those things which were written in the books. Revelation 20. Jesus says himself in John 12: The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. At that time the wicked shall not get away with his unrighteousness, and the hope of the upright shall be realized. Every deed will find its place as deserved. Then that which was hidden in the darkness, and the counsels of the heart shall be manifest. 1 Corinthians 4. Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement. Matthew 12:36. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Romans 14:12. Their conscience will accuse them. They will seek death and not find it; they will want to die, but death will flee from them. They will say to the mountains: Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? Revelation 6. Then he will come in his vengeance against all who have not been obedient to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they shall suffer greatly. Gloriously and marvelously, he shall appear to his saints. He will sit on this throne of glory and summon all nations to appear before him, and judge everybody's works and thoughts. The wicked will be full of dismay and despair when their sins shall be held against them. And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Matthew 25. Then they will be with all the saints, with unspeakable joy, before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. Revelation 7. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew 25. They will find themselves forsaken in eternal agony and pain but see those to the right go into eternal bliss. The ungodly will be thrown into torment where they shall stay for ever and ever, and where the lake of fire shall rise and burn without ceasing and where they shall have no peace for ever and for ever. On the other hand, the righteous, who have in patience and good works striven for eternal life, shall go into a blissful heaven to be with Christ. It will be the kind of joy that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1 Corinthians 2:9. Amen.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

EMC-KG, 1973

I. OF THE WORD OF GOD

We believe that the whole Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God; that it is the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct (II Peter 1:21; Matt. 5:18; 24:35; II Tim. 3:16).

II. OF THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD

We believe that there is but one God, eternal, infinite, and unchangeable, who exists and reveals Himself in three persons — Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deut. 6:4; Psalms 90:2; Gen. 17:1; Psalm 147:5, 139:7-12; Isaiah 40:28, 57:15; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 1:8, 12).

III. OF THE CREATION

We believe that God is the Creator and Originator of all things according to the Genesis account (Gen. 1:2; Ex. 20:11; Mk. 10:6; Heb. 11:3).

IV. OF THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created by an immediate act of God, in His own image and after His own likeness; that by one act of disobedience he became sinful in nature, spiritually dead, subject to physical death, and from this fallen condition he was unable to save himself (Gen. 1:26, 27; 2:7, 16, 17; Eph. 2:1-3, 12; Rom. 5:6; John 6:44).

V. OF JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God; that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary; that He was without sin; that by His death He provided the only atonement for sin by the shedding of His blood, the divinely appointed substitute, thus reconciling man to God; that He rose again from the dead, ascended to glory, and lives to make intercession for His own (John 1:1, 14; Lk. 1:35; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:20-23; Isa. 53:5f; Rom. 5:8-10; Matt. 28:5; I Cor. 15:20; Acts 1:11; Heb. 7:25; Acts 4:12).

VI. OF SALVATION

We believe that the only way of salvation for man is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ; that man is justified from all sin on the ground of Christ's shed blood and resurrection; that when a person receives the new birth it is evidenced by a transformed life which is devoted to good works and a daily striving for holiness (John 3:15; Eph. 2:8; John 1:12, 13; Acts 4:12; James 2:24).

VII. OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit exists eternally as the third Person in the Trinity; that He convicts the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come; that He indwells and comforts the believer, guides him into truth, empowers for service and enables him to live a life of righteousness (Acts 5:3, 4; 1:8; Matt 28:19; John 16:7f, 13; I Cor. 3:16; II Cor. 3:3, 17; Rom. 8:1-4; Gal. 4:6).

VIII. OF ASSURANCE

We believe that it is the privilege of every believer to know he has passed from death to life, that God is able to keep him from falling, and that faith and obedience are essential to the maintenance of one's assurance and growth in grace (I John 3:14; Gal. 3:11; John 8:31f; I Peter 1:5-11; Rom. 8:14-17).

IX. OF THE CHURCH

We believe that the Church is the body of Christ, composed of all those who through repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been born again and have been baptized by one Spirit into one body; that the Church is the fellowship of those who are in the kingdom of Christ, the assembly of those who believe in Him, the brotherhood of the saints; that it is the Church's divinely appointed mission to preach the Gospel to every creature; to conform to the will and image of Christ in full discipleship and to teach obedience to the will of God (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:23; Col. 1:18; Acts 20:21; Lk. 24:47; Acts 17:30; 16:31; Gal. 3:25; I Cor. 12:13; Matt. 28:19f; Acts 1:8; Rom. 8:20; Gal. 4:19; Col. 3:1-4).

X. OF SATAN AND HIS KINGDOM

We believe in the personality of Satan, the prince of the powers of darkness. The devil is the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning. We believe that Satan and his hosts seek to delude and lead astray the child of

God by coming as an "angel of light" or as a "roaring lion." The devil and his host blind the minds of the unbelievers, snatch away the Word of Truth at times, inflict illness, and oppress anyone who permits the evil powers entrance. The devil uses any wiles imaginable in obstructing the advance of the Kingdom of God. The Christian therefore is engaged in a spiritual warfare with powers much greater than he has by himself. These evil powers can only be overcome through faith in the blood of Christ and the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore Christians must test the spirits, resist the devil, draw nigh unto God, put on the whole armour of God, and continually consider themselves dead to sin and alive unto God (John 8:39-47; I Tim. 4:1-5; I John 4:1-6; I Peter 5:6-9; James 4:7; Eph. 2:1ff, 6:1ff).

XI. OF DISCIPLESHIP AND NON-CONFORMITY

We believe that there are two opposing kingdoms to which men give their spiritual allegiance, that of Christ and that of Satan. Those who belong to Satan's kingdom live for sin and self, and refuse the obedience of faith (Eph. 2:1-10).

Those who belong to the kingdom of Christ seek

1. To live holy lives and regard their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit and crucify their flesh with its affections and lusts (Titus 2:11-14; II Thess. 3:6; Rom. 13:14).
2. To avoid any unequal yoke with unbelievers (II Cor. 6:14-18; Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 5:11).
3. To walk in love towards God and man, refraining from carnal strife and contentions in all areas of life, from war (Rom. 12:14-21) and from swearing oaths (Matt. 5:33-37; James 5:12); to exercise proper stewardship of time, possessions and abilities (I Cor. 16:1, 2; II Cor. 8 and 9). Their daily Christian walk should manifest complete allegiance to Christ (I John 2:15-17; II Thess. 3:6; I Peter 2:9).

XII. OF ADMINISTRATION

We believe that the Lord has given the Church authority

1. To choose officials (Acts 6:1-6; Tit. 1:5, 6).
2. To regulate the observance of ordinances (Matt. 28:19, 20; John 12).
3. To exercise wholesome discipline (Tit. 3:15; Matt. 18:15-18).
4. To organize and conduct her work in a manner consistent with her high calling and essential to her highest efficiency (Matt. 28:19f; Eph. 4:11-16).

XIII. OF ORDINANCES

We believe in the administration of water baptism upon the confession of a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the observance of the Lord's Supper, and in the believer's feetwashing.

XIV. OF THE RESURRECTION

We believe that Christ Jesus was raised bodily from the dead, and that all men also shall be resurrected bodily, both the just and the unjust, the just to the resurrection of life and the unjust to the resurrection of condemnation (John 20:20, 24-29; 5:28-29; I Cor. 15; Dan. 12:2; Rom. 8:11; Acts 24:15).

XV. OF THE COMING OF CHRIST

We believe in the personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ as the blessed hope of the believers, that "we which are alive and remain," together with the dead in Christ, who will be raised first, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and thus we shall be with the Lord forever (John 14:2f; Acts 1:11; Matt. 24:44; Heb. 10:37; Tit. 2:11-14; I Thess. 4:13-18).

XVI. OF THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

We believe that in the interval between death and resurrection, the righteous will be with Christ in a state of conscious bliss, but the unrighteous will be in a state of conscious suffering (Lk. 16:19-31; 23:43; Phil. 1:23; II Cor. 5:1-8; II Peter 2:4-9).

XVII. OF THE FINAL STATE

We believe that hell is the place of torment prepared for the devil and his angels, where with them the unrighteous will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire forever and ever and that heaven is the final abode of the righteous, where the righteous will dwell in the fullness of joy forever and ever (Matt. 25:41-46; Jude 7; Rev. 14:8-11; 20:10, 15; II Cor. 5:1; Rev. 21:3-8; Rev. 22:1-5).

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THE CONFESSION OF FAITH

1. GOD

- a. We believe in one God manifested as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Matt. 28:19, 3:16-17.
- b. We believe that God is eternal and self existing. Ex. 3:14, Gen. 21:33 and Isa. 40:28
- c. We believe that God is the creator of all things. Gen. 1 and 2.

2. CHRIST

- a. We believe that Jesus Christ was God incarnate. I Tim. 3:16 and John 1:1-14.
- b. We believe that Jesus Christ had two natures: He was both human and divine. Matt. 1:21 I Tim. 2:5, I John 5:20.
- c. We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost and was born of the Virgin Mary. Matt. 1:18 - 2:12, Luke 1:30 - 39
- d. We believe that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world. I Tim. 2:16, Heb. 2:9, I John 2:2.
- e. We believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. I Cor. 15:3-4, Luke 24:36-43, Acts 2:24, I Cor. 6:14, I Peter 1:21.
- f. We believe that Jesus Christ rose up into heaven as our High Priest. Heb. 9:24-26, I John 2:12, Rom. 8:34.
- g. We believe in the personal imminent return of Jesus Christ. I Cor. 15, Matt. 16:27, John 14:3, I Thess 4:13-18, Rev. 22:12-20, Matt. 25:31-46

3. HOLY SPIRIT

- a. We believe that the Holy Spirit is God, and has revealed Himself as a living person. Acts 3:4-5, John 14:17, 16:14, I Cor. 2:11, Heb. 9:14.
- b. We believe that the Holy Spirit works in: and
 - 1) Enabling men to know God and to serve Him. Acts 1:3-4, John 16:12-13, I Cor. 2:12.
 - 2) Being an agent in regeneration. John 3:6-7, Titus 3:5 and sanctification, Rom. 8:2-4.
 - 3) In sealing the believers. Eph. 1:13, 4:30, II Cor. 1:21-23.
 - 4) Being an agent in the formation of the church. Acts 2:14-41, Acts 4:4.
- c. We believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in regenerated man and makes of him a possession of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Rom. 8:9, Eph. 1:13-14.

4. MAN

- a. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God. Gen. 1:26-27, 5:1, I Cor. 11:7.
- b. We believe that the human race has fallen in the sin of Adam. Gen. 3:1-8, I Tim. 2:13-14, Rom. 5:12-19, I Cor. 15:21-22.
- c. We believe that man is a living soul. Gen. 2:7, I Thess. 5:23, Heb. 4:12.

5. SIN

- a. We believe that evil originated with the fall of some angels in heaven. Jude 6, II Peter 2:4, Isa. 14:12, Ezek. 28:17.
- b. We believe in evil satanic spiritual forces which try to lead man astray. Eph. 6:12, II Cor. 2:11, II Cor. 11:14-15.
- c. We believe in the personality of Satan who is the arch enemy of God and seeketh eternal destruction of man. Job 1:6-12, John 8:44, II Cor. 11:13-15, Eph. 6:12-16, Rev. 20:1-3.

6. SALVATION

- a. We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ, His resurrection and His ascension constitute the only ground of salvation. I Peter 1:18-19, Heb. 9:2-22-28, Rom. 4:25, Rom. 6:4-5, Rom. 5:9-10.

- b. We believe that genuine faith in Jesus Christ (Which includes repentance) is the only means of salvation and that it is a gift of God. Rom. 10:9, 6:23, Acts 2:21, Eph. 2:8, Acts 11:18.

- c. Position of Sanctification: The scriptures teach that the moment a man believes in Christ, he is sanctified. I Cor. 1:2, Col. 1:2, Heb. 10:10.

- d. Progressive Sanctification: The scriptures speak of a progressive sanctification of the believers which refers to all walk and continues through life. John 17:17, Gal. 5:16-23, Eph 5:25-27, I John 7:1-9.

- e. Assurance: The scriptures teach that the believers may have the assurance of possessing eternal life in Christ by faith (I John 5:13) and that the believer is kept by the power of God through abiding faith. I John 3:14, I John 5:13, Rom. 8:16, II Cor. 12:9, Jude 24 & 25, Rom. 16:26-27, Gal. 3:11, I Peter 1:5.

7. CHURCH

- a. The Church is the body of Jesus Christ composed of all those who have been born of the Spirit of God. John 1:13, I Cor. 12:12-27, Col. 1:18-24, Eph. 1:22, John 3:23-32.
- b. We believe that the church has been organized in to local congregations. Acts 8:1, 11:22, 13:1, 2:17.

8. DISCIPLESHIP

- a. We believe that Jesus Christ not only taught the way of life by practical example, He walked in it, and that it is God's plan that every individual, as well as all mankind, should walk this way. Further we believe that it is imperative for every follower of Christ to reveal the love and holiness of God through their personal as well as social life. This includes:
 - 1) We believe in the biblical teaching of non-resistance. Matt. 5:38-47, 7:12, 20:52, Acts 5:29.
 - 2) We believe in non-swearing of the oath. Matt. 5:34-37, James 5:12.
 - 3) We believe in non-conformity to the world. II Cor. 6:14-18, Rom. 12:1-2.
 - 4) We believe in living a simple life. II Cor. 1:12.

9. FUTURE STATE

- a. We believe in the rapture of the saints. I Thess. 4:16-17, John 14:3.
- b. We believe in the resurrection of the dead. I Thess 4:16, John 11:25-26, I Cor. 15:53.
- c. We believe in the eternal bliss of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the unrighteous. Rev. 20:11-15, 21:8, Matt. 25:31-46, Rev. 21:22, I Cor. 15:23-24.
- d. We believe in the judgment of nations. II Thess. 1:7-10, Matt 25:31-46.
- e. We believe in the establishment of a Kingdom where Christ will rule. Acts 1:6-7, Rev. 11:15, Isa. 2:1-4

10 THE BIBLE

We believe in the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible as the Word of God and that it is the only reliable standard for our faith and life. II Tim. 3:16, II Peter 1:21.

11 ORDINANCES

- a. We believe in baptism of the believer upon confession of faith in Jesus Christ, to be administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Mark 16:16, Matt. 28:19.
- b. Communion - We believe in observing the Lord's Supper as a memorial of His broken body and His shed blood given as an atoning sacrifice of the sins of the Word. Matt. 26:26-29, I Cor. 11:23-25.

12 MARRIAGE

- a. We believe that marriage is instituted of God and therefore a sacred bond in which both partners seek to live together in christian harmony. Eph. 5:22-23, I Cor. 7:1-5, I Peter 3:1-7.
- b. We believe that marriage should be solemnized by a minister.

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ARTICLES OF FAITH

ARTICLE I - THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the original texts of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which the Church historically accepted as the holy Scriptures are God-breathed. These Scriptures are truth written by holy men who were chosen and equipped by God for this special task.

II Timothy 3:16-17 *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

II Peter 1:20-21 *"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."*

The primary content of the revelation is truth about God Himself, about his acts in history, about men in his sinful condition and about the relationship that can be established and maintained between God and man through the person and work of Jesus Christ who completed God's plan of salvation.

Psalms 119:105 *"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"*

II Timothy 3:15 *"...from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."*

John 14:6 *"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"*

We believe the Scriptures, errorless in the original documents, to be Divine authority in all matters upon which they touch. Their truthfulness is not negated by the occurrences of such things as irregularities of grammar or spelling, intended and conventional generalizations or approximations, various literary devices, observational descriptions of nature or reports of false statements made by evil persons. Since God the Holy Spirit is the source of the message as well as the mover and supervisor of those who recorded it, the Bible is reliable in what it communicates and in the supreme authority as a guide for faith and practice. Nothing may be taken from it and nothing may be added.

Revelation 22:18-19 *"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."*

ARTICLE II – GOD

We believe that the one and only true God is self existent, perfect, infinite, personal, unchangeable and eternal Spirit.

Isaiah 45:22 *"...I am God, and there is no other."*

John 4:24 *"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."*

He is perfect in holiness, love, justice, goodness, wisdom and truth.

Exodus 34:6 *"And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness...'"*

Also see: Deut. 32:4; Isa. 6:3, 57:15; Psa. 103:8;
I Tim. 1:17; II Pet. 3:9

He is the omnipotent omniscient and omnipresent Creator and Sustainer of all things visible and invisible. He is both immanent in and transcendent to creation.

Jeremiah 10:12 *"But God made the earth by his power; He founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding."*

Also see: Gen. 35:11

Jeremiah 23:24 *"'Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?' declares the Lord. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' declares the Lord."*

Also see: Psa. 139:7-10; Amos 9:2-3

Hebrews 4:13 *"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account."*

Also see: Acts 15:18

He exists and reveals Himself in three persons, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These are equal in their divine perfection, though distinct in manifestation, and execute distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

John 15:26 *"When the Counselor comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth Who goes out from the Father, He will testify about Me;"*

Also see: Matt. 28:19; John 10:30; I Cor. 2:10;
Eph. 2:18; II Cor. 13:14

ARTICLE III – JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was made in the likeness of men. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, thus blending organically and permanently his divine nature with human nature in one unique person without a third nature being formed.

John 1:14 *"The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Philippians 2:7c-8a *"...being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, ..."*

Also see: Matt. 1:18-25; I Tim. 3:16; Heb. 2:14a

The purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God and to redeem man. This redemption was accomplished by Christ's death and resurrection.

I Peter 1:18-19 *"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."*

I Corinthians 15:3-4 *"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,..."*

Also see: I Pet. 2:24, 3:18; I John 2:2

He ascended into heaven and is now at the right hand of God interceding for us.

Luke 24:51 *"While he was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven."*

Hebrews 8:1 *"The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a High Priest, Who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,...."*

Also see: Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; I John 2:1; I Pet. 3:2

He is the head of the Church which is his body.

Colossians 1:18 *"And He is the head of the body, the Church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy."*

He has an exalted position and ultimately every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord.

Philippians 2:9-11 *"Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in Heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

ARTICLE IV - THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son lives in all believers.

John 15:26 *"When the Counselor comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth Who goes out from the Father, He will testify about me;"*

I Corinthians 6:19 *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, Who is in you, Whom you have received from God? You are not your own;"*

Also see: Rom. 8:9

His ministry, since his coming on the day of Pentecost, is broad and varied. He convicts and convinces the world of sin, of righteousness and judgment. He restrains the progress of evil until God's purposes are accomplished.

John 16:8-11 *"When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see Me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."*

Also see: II Thess. 2:7

He bears witness to the truth preached, regenerating those who repent of their sins and who exercise faith in Jesus Christ.

John 3:5-8 *"Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, You must be born again. The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

Also see: Acts 5:30-32

He instructs, comforts and guides God's children.

John 16:13 *"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; He will speak only what He hears and He will tell you what is yet to come."*

Romans 8:26 *"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express."*

Also see: John 14:16-18, 26

He sanctifies, equips and empowers the child of God for service.

- I Peter 1:2 *"Who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood."*
- I Corinthians 12:11 *"All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each man, just as He determines."*
- Acts 1:8 *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*
- Also see: I Cor. 2:1-4; Eph. 3:16

He produces Christ-like qualities in the believer.

- Galatians 5:22-23 *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."*

He will graciously and ultimately give immortality to our resurrected bodies.

- Romans 8:11 *"And if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He Who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, Who lives in you."*

ARTICLE V – MAN

A. His Creation

We believe that man was created by an immediate act of God.

- Genesis 2:7 *"And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being."*

He was created in the image and likeness of God. He was without sin, enjoyed fellowship with God and was capable of full obedience to His will.

- Genesis 1:27 *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."*

Also see: Genesis 2 and 3

He was created in order that he might glorify God and enjoy Him forever. In so doing, man finds his greatest measure of blessedness and true enjoyment.

- Isaiah 43:6b-7 *"Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth--everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."*

Ephesians 1:5-6

"...He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--to the praise of his glorious grace which he has freely given us in the One He loves."

Also see: Eph. 1:18

B. His Fall

We believe that man was confronted with a moral choice in the garden.

Genesis 2:15-17

"And the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the Garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'"

By voluntarily transgressing God's command and yielding to the enticement of Satan, man lost his original condition, became physically, morally, intellectually and spiritually depraved and was alienated from God.

Romans 5:12, 18

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men."

Also see: Gen. 3:1-6

In consequence of this act of disobedience, the entire human race became involved in sin, so that in every heart there is by nature that evil disposition which eventually leads to acts of sin which incur guilt and bring about the righteous judgment of God.

Romans 3:10-12

"As it is written: 'There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.'"

Also see: Isa. 53:6; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 1:19-32;
I Cor. 2:14; I John 1:8-10

Therefore all men are sinners and guilty before God, are dead in their sins, and unable to save themselves.

Romans 3:23

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Also see: Eph. 2:1

C. His Eternal Destiny

We believe that there are two eternal, conscious destinies for men; Heaven for the righteous and Hell for the unrighteous.

John 5:28-29

"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."

Also see: Psa. 9:17; John 14:1-3

After the great White Throne Judgment, and after all the enemies of God are consigned to their place of eternal punishment, the present order of things will be dissolved and the new Heaven and the new Earth wherein dwells righteousness shall be revealed as the eternal abiding place in which the righteous shall dwell.

Isaiah 65:17

"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind."

11 Peter 3:13

"But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new Heaven and a new Earth, the home of righteousness."

Also see: Rev. 21:1-22:7

ARTICLE VI – SALVATION

We believe that God must and will punish sin because He is holy and cannot tolerate it. This punishment must come either to the guilty person or to a satisfactory substitute. Because it is not God's will that any should perish, He has provided the way of salvation. Jesus Christ voluntarily offered Himself on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for sin so that all who believe in Him may be redeemed. Initially salvation requires repentance and faith which results in justification, regeneration and sanctification and culminates in resurrection and glorification. Some of these are at times simultaneous in man's experience but are hereafter described separately for the sake of clarity.

A. Repentance

We believe that the Scriptures teach that repentance must precede and accompany regeneration.

Isaiah 55:7

"Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon."

Mark 1:15

" 'The time has come,' he said. 'The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news.' "

Genuine repentance is a necessary attitude of man as a condition for a holy and just God to forgive man's sins. It is produced in man by the kindness of God. It involves godly sorrow for sin, and a proper reverence for God's holiness. It results in confessing and forsaking sin.

Luke 13:3 *"I tell you no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."*

Romans 2:4 *"Or do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?"*

Proverbs 28:13 *"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."*

B. Faith

We believe that faith is essential to salvation. It is the means by which the Word of God is received as true. It is both the gift of God and the response of man.

Ephesians 2:8 *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."*

Hebrews 11:6 *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him."*

Faith is confidence based upon good evidence. It is an assurance born of complete trust in God as revealed through Christ. By faith one trusts in the death of Christ as the only efficacious sacrifice for his sin.

John 20:31 *"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."*

Also see: Rom. 10:10

C. Justification

We believe that justification is a judicial act of God in which He declares the sinner free from condemnation and punishment and restores him to divine favor and privilege. It takes place when the sinner repents and trusts Christ for salvation.

Romans 3:24-26 *"...and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ. God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished--He did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the One who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus."*

Romans 5:1 *"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"*

D. Regeneration

We believe that salvation is wholly of grace and free to all but is conditioned only upon repentance toward God and the acceptance of Christ by faith.

Ephesians 2:8-9 *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast."*

When the sinner has met these conditions, God justifies and regenerates him. Regeneration is the impartation of Divine life. By the operation of the Holy Spirit through the Word, the believer is given a disposition to love and obey God. What was destroyed in Adam is renewed in Christ.

II Corinthians 5:17 *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation the old has gone, the new has come!"*

Also see: Rom. 5:17; Titus 3:4-6

Other terms used in Scripture to describe regeneration are "born again," "converted" and "saved."

See: John 3:7; Acts 4:12

Some evidences of regeneration are: the witness of the Holy Spirit, a personal knowledge of the forgiveness of sin, peace with God, love for God's Word, newness of life, and reconciliation with any against whom sin has been committed.

Romans 8:16 *"The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."*

Also see: Gal. 5:22-23; Matt. 5:23-24

E. Sanctification

God has always required that his people should be holy because He is holy.

See Lev. 11:44; I Pet. 1:16

Sanctification is that action whereby God sets apart his people from sin. It has its source in what Christ has done through his blood making believers a people of his own possession and calling them holy ones, (saints). This holy position is granted when the Christian first believes in Christ. It is neither earned nor achieved by good works but is followed by good works.

See I Cor. 1:2, 30 and 6:9-11; Heb. 13:12 and 10:14

Sanctification is also a process in the Christian life and involves the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God setting one apart from a sinful walk and producing a Christ-life character. This process is experienced through faith and obedience which include consciously yielding the whole life to God and continually letting the Holy Spirit be in control. The results include a manifestation of spiritual fruit and progress in Christian growth which are the will of God for every Christian.

See John 17:17; Rom. 6:13b, 8:29, 12:1-2; I Cor. 3:18
Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:18; I Pet. 1:2

The process of sanctification will be completed upon entering the presence of Christ when the Christian will enjoy a perfectly holy state.

See I Cor. 13:12; I Thess. 5:23-24; I John 3:2

F. Believer's Assurance

We believe that every Christian can have a valid sense of assurance concerning his salvation, his relationship with God and his destiny. Through faith in Jesus Christ, a knowledge of the Scriptures and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, such assurance becomes real and personal.

I John 5:13 *"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."*

Romans 8:16 *"The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."*

I John 3:24 *"Those who obey his commands live in Him, and He in them. And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us."*

There is no need for any believer to be anxious about God's ability or his gracious purpose to keep us for Himself.

See Romans 8:37-39

However, the Scriptures have ample warning for anyone who might be inclined to presume upon the love of God by careless or sinful living.

See Heb. 3:12-13 and 10:26-31

Therefore, it is necessary to examine ourselves to see whether our faith is genuine, a faith that is expressed in attitude and actions by obedient works. Without that kind of faith, there is no Scriptural assurance. The most complete basis for believer's assurance is found in I John.

See II Cor. 13:5

G. Resurrection and Glorification

We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ, and that because He lives, we too shall live.

Luke 24:6a *"He is not here; He has risen!"*

Acts 1:3 *"After his suffering, He showed Himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God."*

II Corinthians 15:22 *"For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."*

Also see: I Cor. 15; Phil. 3:20-21

At the return of Christ, the bodies of the righteous dead will be raised and will, with the living believers, be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. We will be changed so as to have immortal bodies like unto Christ's own glorious body.

I Thess. 4:16b-17a *"...the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."*

Also see: I Cor. 15; Phil. 3:20-21

Our glorification is God's act of redemption and will be realized when we see Him as He is.

I John 3:2 *"Dear Friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."*

ARTICLE VII – THE CHURCH

A. The Nature and Mission of the Church

We believe that the Church in its universal context is composed of all believers of whatever name, race, nation or generation who are vitally united by faith to Christ, the head of the Church.

Ephesians 1:22-23 *"And God placed all things under his feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the Church, which is his body, the fulness of Him who fills everything in every way."*

The Church, as a local organization, is composed of a group of believers in Christ who have voluntarily joined together, who are committed to each other who meet at stated time to worship, to fellowship, to observe the ordinances to teach the Scriptures and to engage in other appropriate activities which help to build the Church to the glory of God.

Churches within the Conference relate to each other as members of one body. In broader relationships, we also acknowledge and appreciate other parts of the Church as evidenced by our affiliation with various inter-denominational groups of life, faith and convictions.

We believe that the Church is commissioned to be Christ's witness to the whole world.

Acts 1:8 *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

Also see: Acts 20:7; II Cor. 5:18-20; Jude 20-21

B. The Gifts for the Church

A spiritual gift is a special endowment or ability given by the Holy Spirit to an individual Christian for the benefit of the Church. God by his sovereign will and wisdom gives to each believer one or more gifts. Therefore, the presence of a gift cannot become the basis of pride or boasting nor a sign of spiritual maturity. Every gift properly exercised brings honor to Jesus Christ, produces unity within the body, develops spiritual maturity and completes the ministry of the Church.

See Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12-14

C. The Ordinances of the Church

We believe that an ordinance is an outward ceremony symbolic of a spiritual truth or experience which was instituted by Christ for perpetual use by the Church. It is not a means of salvation but becomes a source of spiritual inspiration and strength as one is obedient to the Lord's command. We believe that the Christian ordinances are baptism and the Lord's supper.

1. Baptism

We believe that water baptism was instituted by Christ and symbolizes the experience of regeneration and union with him.

Matthew 28:19 *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"*

Also see: Acts 2:38-41 and 8:36-39

It is a public confession of the believer's identification with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.

Colossians 2:12 *"having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, Who raised Him from the dead."*

Baptism is to be administered to believers only, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Each believer may have his choice of mode. However, we encourage immersion because this form of baptism clearly symbolizes its spiritual significance. Water baptism does not save or cleanse from sin. It is the answer of a good conscience toward God. Because of the Scriptural instruction to baptize those who believe, because of the Scriptural example that those who believed were baptized and because of the clear meaning of baptism as indicated above, we recognize only baptism administered to a person after he has confessed faith in Jesus Christ.

Acts 8:36-38 *"As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?' And he ordered the chariot to stop. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him."*

Acts 16:30-34 *"He then brought them out and asked: 'Men, what must I do to be saved?' They replied: 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household.' Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them, and the whole family was filled with joy, because they had come to believe in God."*

2. The Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ on the night of his betrayal and is to be observed by his Church until He returns.

Matthew 26:26-30 *"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom.' When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."*

Luke 22:19b *"... 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'"*

I Cor. 11:26 *"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."*

We believe that it is a memorial of Christ's death, a center of communion and fellowship, a testimony to saving faith, a visible seal of Christ's redemptive covenant, and the assurance of his promised return.

It consists of partaking of the emblems of bread and the fruit of the vine which symbolize the death of Christ for the remission of our sins and reaffirms our continuing dependence upon Him.

Its observance is to be preceded by honest self examination.

I Cor. 11:27-29 *"Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."*

The communion table shall be open to all believers who know themselves to be in right relationship to God irrespective of denomination.

ARTICLE VIII – THE FINAL THINGS

A. The Second Advent of Christ

We believe in the personal, visible and premillennial return of Christ.

Acts 1:11b *"...This same Jesus, Who has been taken from you into heaven will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven."*

John 14:2b-3 *"...I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."*

Also see: Mark 13:22-27

This will be accomplished in two phases. First, Christ will descend from heaven to claim his waiting bride, the living Church, and departed believers.

I Thess. 4:16-17 *"For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."*

He will descend with his saints to establish the long-promised kingdom and reign upon the earth for one thousand years.

Revelation 20:4-6 *"I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the Word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."*

Also see: Dan. 7:13-14; Luke 1:32-33, 21:25-26;
II Thess. 1:3-10; Rev. 5:9-10

B. The Judgments

We believe that the believer's works will be judged for rewards at the judgment seat of Christ at the time of his coming, his sins having been judged in Christ upon the cross.

John 5:24 *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes Him Who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned, he has crossed over from death to life."*

Romans 14:10c, 12 *"...For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God."*

Also see: I Cor. 3:8-15; 4:5; II Tim. 4:8

The unbeliever will appear before God for judgment at the Great White Throne after the millennial reign of Christ. He will then be consigned to the Lake of Fire, there to suffer torment forever and ever with the Devil and his angels.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 *"For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."*

Hebrews 9:27 *"Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment..."*

Also see: Mark 9:43-48; Rev. 20:10-15

Articles of Practice follow in the Manual:

Article I - The Lord's Day

Article II - Christian Stewardship

Article III - Dedication of Children

Article IV - The Home

Article V - Christian Discipleship

Article VI - Attitude Toward Civil Government

Article VII - Attitude Toward Strife and Military
Service

Article VIII - The Christian's Speech

Article IX - The Christian and Illness

PART IV
SCRIPTURE
in
INDIVIDUAL
CONFESSIONS

I. THE DORDRECHT/MC CONFESSIONAL TRADITION

A. THE DORDRECHT CONFESSION OF FAITH (1632/1725)

Genesis:	1:27; 2:7, 15-17, 18, 21-24; 3:6, 15, 15, 23; 5:1, 2; 17:1; 24:4; 28:6, 7
Numbers:	36:6-9
Deuteronomy:	6:14
Job:	19:25, 26
Psalms:	47:8, 9
Isaiah:	2:4; 46:9; 59:2; 66:24
Jeremiah:	31:31
Daniel:	12:2
Micah:	4:3; 5:2
Matthew:	1:21; 3:15; 5:18, 34-37, 39, 39, 44; 7:12, 25; 10:23; 16:16, 18, 18; 17:27; 18:11; 22:20, 21, 30-32; 25:31, 46; 26:26, 28; 28:19, 20, 20, 20
Mark:	9:46; 14:22; 16:15, 15, 16
Luke:	1:31-35; 2:7; 3:8; 6:12, 13, 31; 10:1; 19:13; 21:33; 22:19, 20; 23:1, 52, 53; 24:5, 6, 46, 47, 51
John:	1:14, 29; 3:16, 16, 29; 4:25; 5:28-29; 7:38; 10:9, 11, 15; 11:27; 13:4- 17; 16:28; 20:31
Acts:	1:22, 24; 2:38, 42, 46; 6:3-6; 8:12, 38; 9:18; 10:47; 13:46; 14:15; 16:33; 17:26
Romans:	5:18; 6:3, 4; 8:17, 32; 12:14, 19, 20, 21; 13:1-7; 15:12-19; 16:1, 2, 17
1 Corinthians:	5:5, 6, 9-11, 12; 7:39, 39; 9:5; 10:16; 11:23-26; 12:6, 13; 15:51, 52
2 Corinthians:	1:17; 4:2; 6:16; 13:10
Galatians:	1:8; 4:4, 5
Ephesians:	2:13, 14, 19-21; 4:11-12, 11-12; 4:22-24
Colossians:	1:15; 2:12, 14; 3:9, 10
1 Thessalonians:	4:13; 5:14
2 Thessalonians:	3:14, 15
1 Timothy:	2:1, 2; 3:1, 16; 4:14-16; 5:9-10, 9-10, 20; 6:3-5
2 Timothy:	2:2
Titus:	1:5; 3:1, 2, 7, 10, 11
Hebrews:	1:3; 7:3; 9:15-17; 19:5, 21, 22
James:	5:12, 19, 20
1 Peter:	1:18-19, 18-19; 2:9, 17, 25; 3:9
2 Peter:	1:4
1 John:	2:1, 2; 3:8, 8; 5:7
Revelation:	1:8; 5:3 14:10, 11; 22:18, 19

B. THE CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALS (1921)

Genesis:	1:1, 2, 18, 21, 26, 27, 27; 2:7, 16, 17; 3:1-7, 15; 17:1
Exodus:	4:12; 20:11
Deuteronomy:	6:4
2 Samuel:	23:2
Psalms:	12:6; 90:2; 119:160; 139:7-12; 147:5
Isaiah:	7:14; 40:28; 53:5, 6; 57:15
Jeremiah:	1:9; 49:11
Amos:	3:3
Malachi:	3:6
Matthew:	1:20-25; 5:18, 34-37; 16:18; 18:15-18; 22:21; 24:11, 12, 35, 44; 25:41, 46; 28:6, 19-20, 19-20
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4. THE STATEMENT OF FAITH (1941)

(THIS CONFESSION CONTAINS NO SCRIPTURE REFERENCES)

B. THE LOCAL CHURCH CONFESSIONAL TRADITION

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Revelation:	1:4, 4, 4-5, 5, 5, 5-7, 8, 1:14-2:7, 17, 18; 2; 2:1, 1, 8, 12, 18, 23; 3; 3:6, 6, 20, 20; 4:2-3, 8, 8, 9; 5:5-6, 8, 9, 12-13; 7:17; 8:3, 4; 11:15; 12:10, 10; 15:3, 3; 16:5, 7; 17:14, 14, 14; 19:1, 9; 20; 20:7-15, 21, 22; 21; 21; 22:1-5, 17, 17

B. THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH (1975)

Genesis:	1; 1:27, 27-28; 2:1-3, 18-24; 3:1-19
Exodus:	20:1-17, 8-10
Deuteronomy:	6:4-7
Psalms:	19; 119:105; 139
Proverbs:	5:18-19
Isaiah:	2:4; 6:1-10; 40; 61:1-11
Jeremiah:	3:15
Malachi:	2:13-16
Matthew:	2:23; 5:13-16, 31-32, 33-37; 6:33; 9:43-48; 11:5; 16:24; 18:15-35; 19:4-9, 13-15; 22:17-21; 23:1-12; 26:26-30; 28:18-20, 19, 19-20
Mark:	9:43-48
Luke:	16:22-23; 24:1-36, 27, 44
John:	1:1; 4:24; 5:25-29; 12:26; 13:1-17; 15:4-5, 26; 17:21; 18; 18:19-23
Acts:	1:8, 11; 2:1, 38, 38-44, 42, 46; 4:19; 6:1-6; 13:1-4; 15:1-28; 20:7, 28
Romans:	1:18-23; 3:10-18; 5:12; 6; 6:2-6; 8:1-17, 9-16, 16-27, 21; 12; 12:19-21; 13:1-7, 8-10; 14:5-6
1 Corinthians:	3:11; 6:19; 7:10-11; 10:16-17, 16-17; 11:23-32, 23-32; 12-14; 14:26, 26; 15:21-58
2 Corinthians:	2:6-8; 3:17; 5:18-20, 19; 6:14, 14-18; 13:14
Ephesians:	1:13-14, 22-23; 2:1-3, 1-4, 8-9, 10-22; 4:1-16, 28; 5:6-13, 21, 22-23, 25-27; 6:4
Philippians:	1:21-24; 2:6-8
Colossians:	2:12-13
1 Thessalonians:	4:11-12, 16-17; 5:11, 12-13, 14, 23-24
2 Thessalonians:	3:6, 14-15
1 Timothy:	2:1-6, 5-6; 3:1-10, 16; 5:17-22; 6:15-16
2 Timothy:	3:15-17
Titus:	1:5-9; 2:11-14, 11-14; 3:10
Hebrews:	1:1-2; 4:12; 8:5-13; 9:15-28; 10:23-25; 11:6; 12:14; 13:4
James:	5:12
1 Peter:	2:13-14, 19-23; 3:21; 5:1-5
2 Peter:	1:16-21, 3:3-13
1 John:	1:9; 3:17-18
Jude:	25
Revelation:	1:15; 3:20; 5:9; 20-22; 22:20

IV. THE SMALLER MENNONITE AND RELATED CONFESSIONAL TRADITIONS

A. THE EVANGELICAL MENNONITE CONFERENCE - KLEINE GEMEINDE

CONFESSION OF FAITH (1881/1913)

Genesis:	1; 1:28; 3; 3:15; 6; 17
Exodus:	24
Deuteronomy:	4; 25; 30:15
Ezra:	8:21
Job:	19:25
Psalms:	33; 33:6
Proverbs:	29:18
Ecclesiastes:	2:23, 24; 7:23; 12
Isaiah:	5:9; 7:14; 11:2; 42; 66
Jeremiah:	29:7
Daniel:	7; 7:10; 12
Sirach:	1; 14; 15; 15; 16; 17; 17
Wisdom:	2:23-24; 7:23
Matthew:	3:13; 5:33-48; 1; 10; 12:36; 15:13; 16; 18; 18; 19; 22; 24; 24:27; 25; 26; 28
Luke:	1:35; 16; 21:35; 24
John:	1; 4; 5:28, 29; 6; 8; 10:30; 12:14; 13; 15; 20
Acts:	1; 1; 2; 2; 4; 5; 8; 10; 17:24; 18:8
Romans:	4; 6; 6; 8; 12:19-21; 13:1, 4; 14
1 Corinthians:	1:30; 2:10; 3; 4:5; 5; 5:5, 5, 13; 7:39, 39; 11:23; 12; 15; 15
2 Corinthians:	2:8; 4:14; 10:3, 18
Galatians:	3; 5:6
Ephesians:	2:20; 3:9, 17; 4; 4; 5:26, 27
Philippians:	2; 2
Colossians:	1; 1:15, 16; 2
1 Thessalonians:	4; 4:16
2 Thessalonians:	3:15
1 Timothy:	1:20; 2:15; 3; 3:16; 6
2 Timothy:	2:1
Titus:	1; 2:12
Hebrews:	1; 1; 4; 4; 9; 9:27
1 Peter:	2; 3; 3:19
2 Peter:	1:21
1 John:	1; 4; 5:7
Jude:	14, 15
Revelation:	14:13; 20:11; 21

B. THE KRIMMER MENNONITE BRETHREN

ARTICLES OF FAITH (1929/40)

Genesis:	1:1, 1, 26, 26, 27, 27, 27, 28; 2:18, 18, 21, 22, 23, 23, 24; 3:6, 7, 8-24; 6:2-4
Exodus:	20:8-10, 10, 11
Leviticus:	23:15, 16
Deuteronomy:	4:35, 35; 6:4, 4; 7:1-4
Job:	42:5, 6
Psalms:	33:6, 6, 9, 9; 51:7; 118:24; 139:1, 1-16, 2, 3, 4, 5; 145:8, 8, 17, 17
Isaiah:	53:5
Daniel:	7:10, 10
Joel:	2:12, 12, 13, 13
Amos:	3:3, 3
Micah:	5:2, 2
Matthew:	1:21, 21; 3:16, 16, 17; 5:23, 24, 33-37, 38-40, 44, 45, 46-48; 6:9; 16:18, 18; 18:15-17, 15-18, 17, 25-35; 19:3-9; 22:21, 21; 24; 24:27; 25; 25:13, 31-34, 41, 46; 26; 26:39, 52; 28:1, 1, 10, 19, 19
Mark:	1:15; 10:11, 12; 14
Luke:	1:31-35; 2; 2:11; 10:13; 19:8, 8, 22
John:	1:1, 1, 2, 2, 12, 12, 14, 14, 14; 3:3, 16, 16; 5:17, 17, 18, 18, 28, 29; 6:69; 13; 13:12-17, 35; 14:16, 16, 17, 17, 26; 15:26, 26; 16:8-11, 12-15; 17
Acts:	1:21; 2; 2; 2:1-4; 3:21; 5:29, 29; 10; 20:7, 8, 23, 28, 28
Romans:	5:1, 1, 2, 12, 18; 6:4, 4-11, 12, 12, 13, 13, 22, 22; 12:19, 20, 21; 13:1-7, 1-7
1 Corinthians:	5:13, 13, 7:39; 11:23-27, 25, 26, 27; 15:42-43, 55, 57
2 Corinthians:	5:17, 17, 21, 21; 6:14; 10:4; 13:4
Galatians:	1:8, 9; 6:1, 1
Ephesians:	1:13, 13, 14, 14; 2:1-9, 3, 3, 9, 19, 19, 20, 20; 3:15, 15; 4:30, 32; 5:25-27, 26, 27; 6:1-4, 17
Philippians:	2:7, 8, 9-11
Colossians:	2:12; 3:13
1 Thessalonians:	4:16-18
2 Thessalonians:	3:6, 6
1 Timothy:	2:1-3, 1-3; 6:15, 15, 16
2 Timothy:	3:16, 16
Titus:	2:11
Hebrews:	4:12, 12; 6:18-20; 9:12, 12; 11:6; 12:14, 14
James:	5:12, 19, 19, 20, 20
1 Peter:	3:15, 21, 21; 5:2, 2-4, 3
2 Peter:	1:21, 21
1 John:	5:20
Revelation:	1:3, 7; 2:1, 1, 2, 2; 22:12, 18, 19, 20, 21

C. THE EVANGELICAL MENNONITE BRETHREN

ARTICLES OF FAITH (1924/1950)

Genesis:	1:1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 26, 26, 26, 26-27, 26-28; 2:15-17, 16, 17; 3:1-3, 6, 7-13, 8-9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16-19; 6:6; 9:1-2; 15:6; 19:1-26, 13-15; 22:13-14; 35:11; 39:21; 50:20
Exodus:	3:14
Judges:	6:11-22
2 Samuel:	24:16-17
2 Kings:	6:17
Job:	1:12, 12; 2:1-6; 33:4
Psalms:	15:6-7; 23:1; 33:6; 34:7; 42:4; 62:8; 90:2, 2; 94:9-10; 102:24-27; 104:4, 27-30; 139:7
Isaiah:	6:3; 37:36, 36; 45:21; 53:4-6; 55:7
Jeremiah:	10:12-13; 17:9-10; 23:24
Daniel:	1:9
Matthew:	1:18-25; 4:11; 7:7-11; 10:29-30; 13:19, 39, 41; 18:10, 10; 24:14, 21, 29-31, 32, 32-34, 36-42, 41, 42; 25:31f., 41, 26:53; 28:2-7, 19
Mark:	1:13; 10:45; 13:32
Luke:	1:26, 28-35, 35; 2:9-13; 15:11-24; 16:22, 23; 22:31f, 43; 24:39
John:	1:1-3, 12, 14, 14-18, 18, 29; 3:3, 3-8, 5, 14-16, 16, 16, 16, 36, 36; 4:20-24, 24; 5:4, 22-29, 28-29, 28-29; 10:30; 12:31; 13:2; 14:3, 16-17, 26; 15:26, 26; 16:8-11, 11, 13, 14; 17; 17:17; 20; 20:12, 25-29, 29, 30-31; 21
Acts:	1:9-11, 10-11, 11; 2:17-18; 3:19; 5:3-4, 19, 19, 20; 10:3; 12:7-11; 14:15; 15:18; 16:31; 17:28, 30
Romans:	1:7, 16, 19-32; 3:24; 5:1, 1-2, 12, 18; 6:23, 23; 8:11, 13, 16, 26; 10:17-18
1 Corinthians:	2:1-4, 9-10, 9-12, 14; 3:11-15, 16; 4:9, 9; 6:11, 19; 9:25; 10:13; 15:22, 50-52, 54-56, 57
2 Corinthians:	4:4, 5:10, 10, 17, 17, 21; 11:14f, 13:14
Galatians:	2:16; 3:13, 26; 4:7; 5:22-23
Ephesians:	1:4-6, 7; 2:2, 8, 10, 18; 3:16; 4:6, 18, 22-24, 24; 6:11-12, 11-13, 12
Philippians:	1:23; 3:21
Colossians:	1:15, 15-17, 16, 21; 2:15; 3:1-9, 3-4, 10, 10-17
1 Thessalonians:	1:9, 9; 2:13, 15, 19; 4:13-17, 16; 5:23, 24
2 Thessalonians:	1:7; 2:3-10, 7, 13
1 Timothy:	2:5, 5-6; 4:1-3; 5:21 6:15, 16
2 Timothy:	3:1-5, 15, 16-17, 16-17; 4:1, 4:8
Titus:	2:3; 3:4-7
Hebrews:	1:3, 5-10, 12, 14, 14, 18; 2:14, 14; 4:13, 15; 9:11-12; 10:10, 10-14, 14, 19-22; 11:1, 3; 12:2, 22
James:	1:12, 17, 4:7; 5:1-9
1 Peter:	1:10-11, 18-29; 3:22; 5:4, 8
2 Peter:	1:4, 20-21, 21; 3:9, 10
1 John:	3:1-3, 2, 2, 3, 5; 4:4, 8; 5:4-5, 11-12, 17, 20
Revelation:	1:7; 2:3; 3:11, 19f; 4:4; 5:9-10; 9:1-5; 14:13; 19:17; 20:1-9, 2-10, 4-6, 10, 10-15, 11-15, 12, 14-15; 21-22:5; 22:12

D. THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, MENNONITE

A STATEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE (1952)

Genesis:	1; 1:27, 31; 2; 2:18
Exodus:	22:25
Leviticus:	19:27, 27, 21:5, 5, 25:26, 37
Deuteronomy:	23:19
Nehemiah:	5:7
Psalms:	9:17; 15:5; 90:2; 118:8
Proverbs:	16:18; 28:8
Isaiah:	3:16-24; 24:2
Jeremiah:	15:10; 49:11
Matthew:	1:20, 21; 5:17-21, 29, 30, 34-37, 38-45; 6:31-34; 12:40; 16:18, 19; 18:8, 9, 15-18, 15-18; 19:3-12; 24:42-44; 25:31, 32, 41-46, 45, 46; 28:18-20, 19, 20
Mark:	6:13; 10:2-12
Luke:	22:19, 20
John:	1:1, 6, 7, 42; 2:15-17; 3:16, 16; 5:28, 29; 13:4-17, 17; 15:26; 16:13-17; 18:20, 36, 36
Acts:	1:3, 5, 8, 11; 2:16, 17; 4:12; 5:29
Romans:	7:2, 18; 11:33; 12:1, 1-2, 1-2, 2, 17-21; 13:1-5; 16:16, 17, 18
1 Corinthians:	5:9-13; 6:14-18; 7:39; 9:25; 10:16, 17; 11:2, 6, 14, 15, 16-18, 23-26; 12:13; 15; 16:20
2 Corinthians:	5:10; 6:14, 14-18, 15, 17; 7:1; 10:4; 13:12
Galatians:	5:19-21, 24
Ephesians:	4:4-6, 11-16; 5:3
Colossians:	1:18; 2:9; 3:5
1 Thessalonians:	5:22
2 Thessalonians:	3:14
1 Timothy:	2:9-10; 5:8, 10 6:6-10
2 Timothy:	3:16
Titus:	1:15
Hebrews:	4:12; 11:13; 13:17
James:	5:6, 12, 14, 15
1 Peter:	1:15; 2:12; 3:1, 3-5; 5:14
2 Peter:	3:11
1 John:	2:15-17; 3:3; 5:7, 15, 16
2 John:	9-11
Revelation:	14:11; 18:4; 22:5

E. THE AMISH CHRISTIAN CHURCH - BERNE INDIANA

ARTICLES OF FAITH (n.d.)

(THIS CONFESSION CONTAINS NO SCRIPTURE REFERENCES)

F. THE EVANGELICAL MENNONITE CHURCH - EGLY AMISH

ARTICLES OF FAITH (1917/1936)

Genesis:	1:1, 27, 27; 2: 7, 18; 3:6-24; 6:5, 12
Exodus:	18:21-23; 20:8, 13
Numbers:	8:17
Deuteronomy:	7:2, 3; 10:15; 16:18
2 Samuel:	23:2
2 Chronicles:	7:16
Nehemiah:	13:25-27
Job:	42:5, 6
Psalms:	83;18; 118:22, 24; 119:103; 147:5
Proverbs:	4:18
Ecclesiastes:	7:29
Isaiah:	6:3; 8:20; 53:3, 4, 4, 5, 6; 55:1
Jeremiah:	1:5; 17:9, 10
Ezekiel:	18:19, 20
Daniel:	3:15-18; 6:7-10; 12:2
Joel:	2:12, 13
Amos:	3:3
Zechariah:	13:1; 14:9
Matthew:	3:8-10; 5:21, 23, 24, 33-37, 38, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 46, 48; 7:12, 20; 8:16, 17; 10:28; 17:24-27; 18:11; 19:9; 20:28; 22:21; 23:10; 24:42, 44, 44-46; 25:34, 41, 46, 46; 26:27, 28; 28:19, 19
Mark:	1:15; 2:27; 6:13; 9:43_48; 11:25, 26; 13:33-37; 14:22-24; 16:16, 18
Luke:	1:30-35; 2:7; 3:22; 4:1; 9:26; 10:13; 12:35-37; 14:17; 21:27, 34-36, 36; 22:19, 20; 24:49
John:	1:1-14, 12, 13, 29; 3:3, 5, 6, 6, 7, 8, 8, 16, 19; 5:17, 42; 10:1-5, 16, 29, 30, 35; 13:4-17; 14:3, 16, 26; 15:12, 26, 26; 16:8-11, 13, 30-34; 17:19; 20:19, 19, 22, 26

Acts:	1:5, 5, 8, 8, 11, 16; 2:4, 33, 38, 38, 38, 39, 41, 47; 3:19, 21; 4:18-20, 29; 5:30-32; 8:12-17, 36-39, 37; 9:17, 20; 10:43; 11:14, 18; 13:39; 15:11; 17:2, 30, 31; 19:1, 26; 20:7
Romans:	1:16, 17, 18, 32; 2:1-16; 3:9-18; 4:4, 5, 5, 24, 25; 5:1, 1, 2, 9, 11, 12, 15-19, 17, 21; 7:18; 8:2, 9, 15, 23, 34; 9:4; 10:10; 12:17-21, 18; 14:4, 9-13; 16:26
1 Corinthians:	1:2, 4-8, 30, 30, 31; 2:10, 11, 14; 6:1-8; 7:39; 10:16, 17; 11:26, 27-30; 12:4-13, 12-14, 13; 14:10; 16:12
2 Corinthians:	4:6, 7; 5:5, 10, 17, 21; 6:14, 15; 7:5; 10:4; 13:5, 14
Galatians:	1:10; 3:10, 25, 26; 4:4-7, 5; 5:13-15, 16-23
Ephesians:	1:3-6, 5, 7; 2:2, 3, 5, 18; 4:3, 18, 20-24; 5:9, 25-27
Philippians:	2:6, 7, 13; 3:20, 20
Colossians:	3:1, 4, 5
1 Thessalonians:	3:12, 12, 13, 13, 13; 4:13-17, 16, 17, 18; 5:21, 23
1 Timothy:	2:1-8; 4:8; 6:14
2 Timothy:	3:15, 16, 17
Titus:	1:15; 2:13, 14; 3:1, 5, 5, 6
Hebrews:	2:9, 14; 3:4; 4:14; 8:1; 9:24, 27; 10:10, 14, 27, 36, 37; 12:14, 24
James:	1:18; 5:7, 8, 12, 14, 15
1 Peter:	1:10-12, 22-25; 2:9, 13, 14; 3:8, 9, 21, 22
2 Peter:	1:21; 2:9; 3:8, 10, 12, 13
1 John:	2:1, 2, 25, 28; 3:2, 3, 15, 23; 4:1, 6, 10, 10, 24; 5:1, 4, 7, 10-13, 18
Jude:	14
Revelation:	5:10; 19:16; 20:1-6; 21:6-8, 27; 22:11, 17

ARTICLES OF FAITH (1949)

Genesis:	1:1, 27, 27; 2:7, 15-17, 18, 24; 3:1-6; 14:18-20; 23:20-22; 35:11
Exodus:	18:21-23; 20:8
Leviticus:	27:30
Deuteronomy:	7:2-4; 24:1-4
1 Samuel:	1:28
1 Kings:	8:27
Nehemiah:	13:25-27
Psalms:	4:3; 19:9; 24:1; 90:2; 102:24-27; 103:19; 118:24; 119:105; 139:7-10
Ecclesiastes:	12:14
Isaiah:	6:3; 45:21-22; 53:4-5, 4-5, 6; 55:1, 7; 59:14; 65:17; 66:22
Jeremiah:	10:12-13; 17:9; 23:24
Daniel:	7:13-14
Amos:	9:2-3
Haggai:	2:8
Malachi:	3:6, 10, 10-12
Matthew:	1:18-25; 5:25, 31-32, 33-37, 44; 8:16-17; 16:24; 18:15-17, 18-20; 19:3-12, 4-6, 13-16; 20:28, 28; 23:10, 23; 24:21; 26:26-30, 51-52; 28:19, 19
Mark:	1:15; 2:27-28; 6:13; 9:43-48; 10:11-12; 13:22-37; 16:16
Luke:	1:22-33; 2:22-24; 6:38; 11:13, 13; 18:15-17; 22:19-20; 24:49, 49
John:	1:12, 12-13, 14; 3:3-5, 5-8, 19, 25; 10:1-5, 10, 30, 35, 37, 38; 13:4-17; 14:1-3, 16, 16-18, 17; 15:1-8, 12, 26, 26, 26; 16:8-11, 13; 17:17, 17; 18:20; 20:19, 19, 26, 39, 31
Acts:	1:4, 4-5, 5, 8, 8, 8, 8, 10-11; 2:4, 38, 41; 46, 47, 47; 3:19, 21; 4:12, 12, 19, 31; 5:29, 30-32, 32; 6:1-6; 8:12-18, 15-17, 36-39, 37; 10:44; 11:15-16, 18; 13:39; 14:23; 15:9, 18; 16:30-34, 31; 17:2, 28; 19:1-6; 20:7, 7, 21, 32; 26:18
Romans:	1:19-32; 2:1-16, 8-9; 3:10-12, 10-12; 5:1-9, 12, 18; 6:11-13, 13, 19; 8:11, 13-14, 16-19, 26, 34; 10:9, 9-10, 10, 17; 12:1, 1, 8, 17-21, 17-21; 13:1-7; 14:9-13
1 Corinthians:	1:30; 2:1-4, 10, 14; 3:8-15; 4:5; 5:1-4, 10; 6:1-8, 16; 7:12-15, 39; 8:6; 10:16; 11:23-29; 12:4-13, 12-27; 16:1-2, 2, 2

2 Corinthians:	5:17, 21, 21; 6:14-15, 14-18; 7:10; 10:3-4; 13:14
Galatians:	2:20; 3:2, 11, 13; 4:6; 5:13-15, 16, 22-23, 22-23
Ephesians:	1; 1:5-6, 5-6, 12, 13, 22-23; 2:8, 8, 8-9, 18, 19-22; 3:16, 21; 4:3, 6, 11-12, 11-16, 15-16, 22-24, 24, 30-32; 5:9, 25-27
Philippians:	2:6-7, 6-11, 13
Colossians:	2:12; 3:1, 4, 9-10, 10
1 Thessalonians:	1:5, 4:3, 7, 16-17; 5:15
2 Thessalonians:	1:3-10; 2:7, 13
1 Timothy:	2:1-3, 5-6; 3:16; 4:1-3; 6:16
2 Timothy:	3:16-17, 16-17; 4:1-4, 8
Titus:	3:1, 4-7, 5, 5
Hebrews:	2:9, 14; 4:13; 8:1; 9:11, 12, 14, 27; 10:9-10, 10; 11:1, 3; 12:14; 13:11-12
James:	1:17; 5:12, 13-16
1 Peter:	1:2, 18-21, 23; 2:9-10, 13, 14, 21-23; 3:8-9, 18, 22; 4:11
2 Peter:	1:21, 3:13, 18
1 John:	1:8-10; 2:1; 3:15, 23; 4:10; 5:4
Jude:	14, 20-21
Revelation:	1:10, 5:9, 10; 19:6, 7, 8, 19; 20:4-6, 10-15; 21:1-7; 22:3-7, 17

G. THE UNITED MISSIONARY CHURCH (formerly MENNONITE BRETHREN IN CHRIST)

ARTICLES OF FAITH (1867)

Genesis:	1:27, 3:6; 8:21
Matthew:	5:34-37, 39-45; 17:27; 28:19, 20
Mark:	1:15
Luke:	22:19, 20; 23:33
John:	1:14, 29; 5:28, 29; 13:4-17; 15:15
Acts:	1:14; 2:38, 46
Romans:	5:12, 18; 11:36; 12:14; 13:1-7
1 Corinthians:	5; 5:9-11; 7:39; 12; 12:6
2 Corinthians:	1:17
Galatians:	6:15, 16
2 Thessalonians:	3:14
1 Timothy:	2:1-3; 3:16; 5:20
1 Peter:	1:19; 2:9
1 John:	5:7

DOCTRINES AND DISCIPLINE OF THE UNITED MISSIONARY CHURCH (1951)

Genesis:	1:1, 27; 2:1-9, 18; 3:5-7, 15, 17; 14:20; 28:22
Leviticus:	26:16
Deuteronomy:	28:15-23
Job:	2:7
Psalms:	46:9; 72:8, 10, 11, 17; 96:13
Isaiah:	2:1-4; 11:6-9; 53:3-5
Hosea:	2:18
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H. THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST

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(also called EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CONFESSION)

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